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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The principal aim and object of this Society is to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. The subsidiary objects are: The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and the investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

OCTOBER, 1924

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Dramas of the Mysteries

Let the king resolve to change the face of his court and forcibly evict the animal from the chair of state, restoring the god to the place of divinity.—Through the Gates of Gold.

THROUGHOUT all ages, there has been the tradition of a glorious possibility for mankind, an illumination that makes man immortal and divine. The oldest mythologies of the remotest peoples, the great scriptures of all ages, ring with this high inspiration; there is, indeed, no other theme in all religions.

Our own age, with its skepticism and fever, has heard the great tidings. The word has been clear, insistent; clearer, perhaps, than in any period for millenniums, in part because of the greater need created by our darkness, in part because our age has rid itself of some of the shackles and cruelties of superstition.

Man has worked his way up through innumerable ages, the unconscious Spirit co-operating with the animal nature in his development; through endless struggle and striving, in satisfaction and in suffering, man comes to clear individuality, the intense realization of his personal existence. The light drawn from many realms has been brought to a sharp focus.

When this full individuality is reached, the glorious possibility arises: taking firm hold of his individual nature, man may surrender it to gain a greater. Ceasing to be man, he may become divine, entering into the infinite being and power and wisdom of Divinity; but on condition that he shall at all points, the least as the greatest, surrender his own will to the Divine Will, emptying mind and heart of every lingering shadow of self-seeking, so that there shall be room only for selfless wisdom and beneficence. It is the perfect offering that all ritual sacrifices foreshadow, the attainment of a divinity forecast by all that has been told of the gods.

In the path to this divine event there are tremendous difficulties, all of man's own making, even though he did not create them of deliberate purpose. Just because, from the beginning, unawakened Spirit has been working in man, together with animal perception and desire, there have been immense possibilities of harm: the distortion of spiritual force in the perversion of animal powers; the exaggeration of individuality into egotism, envy, hatred, malice, ambition.

Therefore, when man catches a glimpse of his possible divinity, when the universal message of the glorious future that may be his, awakens his heart, he does not find himself free, unshackled, a light-hearted spirit, ready to speed forth toward the Light; on the contrary, with the vision of the goal, he becomes aware of the impediments, the tremendous drag of the personal self which he has built up, and of the kindred impulses in mankind all about him. He realizes that it is not a question only of enthroning a king; there is first a usurper to be driven out, who will fight every inch of the way, and who has innumerable allies in the man himself, in the human nature about him, and in those older powers of darkness, carried forward from remote spiritual failures in the past.

The Eternal is there, one in essence with his Spirit, drawing him toward divine union; inimical powers, into which he has put so much of his own life, are there also, entwined with the sloth and cowardice and allurement of mankind; the perception of the Eternal is the signal for the battle.

The Eternal is the very essence of humanity, it is Divine Humanity itself, that which mankind shall be when man has become immortal. Therefore, if in the battle the warrior be able to make complete surrender of self, the surrender of cowardice as well as of desire, so that he wins the victory and loses himself in the Eternal, he thereby becomes one with Divine Humanity. Thereafter, through the very essence of his being, he is bound and compelled to toil for the redemption and liberation of all mankind, knowing that the heavy task will not end until all human beings, with hearts and spirits cleansed, have sought for and attained the Light. He accepts that age-long sacrifice with eager love. A part of the true Nirvana is the renouncing of Nirvana.

Since the oneness of man's essence with the Divine Essence is the central fact of all life, and the attainment of that unity is the one true goal of all effort; it is but natural that human records should be full of that great adventure, innumerable writings tell something of the Light and the way thither; some few have undertaken to reveal, so far as may be, the whole of the battle, to chart to the end the pathway to Divinity. The best books have this one theme; the worst books cannot escape from the battlefield, since they depict the mire from which we must rise, the bonds we have created to hold us back.

Because the Eternal is Divine Humanity, because he who gains the Eternal, thereby enters into Divine Humanity, so that the redemption of every human being becomes his concern, his most ardent longing,—therefore those who have won the victory, who have become Masters of life, are impelled by their very nature, the new, divine nature into which they have entered, to stretch out a

helping hand to us, to put on record for our better guidance, the incidents and dangers of the way they have passed, the perils of the battle, which are behind them, but still before us. So it comes that we have, among the best books, many Dramas of the Mysteries, or of the one great Mystery of man's redemption.

That the dramatic form is natural, almost inevitable, is suggested by such a sentence as this, toward the end of *The Crest Jewel of Wisdom:*

"Thus, through this dialogue of Master and disciple, the revelation of the supreme Self has been made, to awake to joy the souls of those who seek liberation."

Dialogue is the first step toward drama, and when the disciple says: "I was wandering in the great dream forest of birth, decay and death created by delusion, day by day afflicted by many pains, stalked by the tiger, egotism; through infinite compassion awakening me from my dream, thou, Master, hast become my saviour!"—the picture which he has evoked almost demands dramatic treatment.

Take another expression of the same conflict, this time from the letter of a living Aryan Master, written forty years ago:

"The path has to be trodden laboriously and crossed at the danger of life; every new step in it leading to the final goal, is surrounded by pit-falls and cruel thorns; the pilgrim who ventures upon it is made first to confront and conquer the thousand and one furies who keep watch over its adamantine gates and entrance—furies called Doubt, Skepticism, Scorn, Ridicule, Envy and finally Temptation—especially the latter; and he who would see beyond has first to destroy this living wall; he must be possessed of a heart and soul clad in steel, and of an iron, never-failing determination, and yet be meek and gentle, humble, and have shut out from his heart every human passion that leads to evil."

These enemies are all of our making; they are the substance of unregenerate human life; therefore, he who fights toward regeneration is inevitably in conflict with them; the conquest of Doubt and Envy and Temptation is that regeneration which carries him forward toward the Eternal.

Just because these enemies are of the essence of human life not yet redeemed, the stuff that human beings are made of, it is easy to find human types that embody them, and thus to turn the contest into drama. As it stands, the Aryan Master's sentence is the argument of a mystery play.

The Crest Jewel of Wisdom is cast in dialogue form, which is the first stage of drama; the Master and the disciple embody the Divine Being, and the human being straining toward the Divine, the Universal Soul and the individual soul, Divine Humanity and one of its fragments seeking union with the whole. The Master and the disciple are not merely personifications of these; they are the realities themselves; unless the Master be one with the Universal Soul, he is no true Master; and in the disciple is every strand of human nature, the evil with the good. It follows that his fight is a fight for humanity; his victory is a victory for all mankind, and in that degree enriches and heals mankind.

The *Katha Upanishad* is also a revelation in dialogue form; the effort has been made, through translation and commentary, to show that it is a true Drama of the Mysteries. Much more in the great Upanishads is of the same texture.

The *Bhagavad Gita* represents a further development. It is, as regards its central theme, a dialogue between Master and disciple. But, while the *Crest Jewel* does not set the stage of the dialogue, nor even name the speakers, the *Bhagavad Gita* does both. The setting is a battlefield; the Master Krishna and Arjuna his disciple are the central persons; the enemies are not so much personified as embodied in the leaders of the opposing host.

Through the Gates of Gold suggests, in the sentence quoted at the outset, that the problem is not only the enthroning of a king, it includes also the eviction of a usurper; and this is the motive of many Dramas of the Mysteries, including the *Bhagavad Gita*. The names, as so often in the Orient, are symbolic: Dhritarashtra, "he who has seized the kingdom," is the father of the usurping Kurus; Duryodhana, "the foul fighter," is the leader of the usurpers; of the two counsellors of the Kuru brothers, Bhishma is "fear," while Drona is the "dark cloud" of delusion, the name meaning also "raven" and "scorpion," both of evil omen. It is as though the enemies in the passage quoted from the Aryan Master had taken form and come to life. So, on the side of the Pandus, Dhrishtadyumna means "he who has seen the splendour," the gleaming of the Gates of Gold, called in the *Gita* "the door of heaven." Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu, means the kind of "self-consciousness" which is akin to self-conceit. Fitly, he is slain in the great battle. Finally, though Arjuna is fighting for the kingdom, the throne is not for himself, but for his elder brother. Not the individual self, but the Higher Self, attains the throne; not the man but the god, whom the man thereafter reverently serves.

As compared with the *Crest Jewel*, the *Bhagavad Gita* is not only more dramatic, richer in action and in colour; it has also a fuller content. The *Crest Jewel* limits its purpose to two things: the lucid revelation of the Eternal as the real Self, not of one man but of mankind; and the undermining of the unreal "me," which is the root of all evil. The supersession of the false self by the Eternal, is the motive of the dialogue. The *Bhagavad Gita* adds more of human feeling, more of religious passion also; it appeals to spiritual valour as well as spiritual wisdom. But both have this in common: they record real experience, the experience of a Master who has fought the battle and attained the victory, and who can, therefore, speak of that high and immortal consciousness which comes with the entry into the Eternal, so far as words can compass it at all. Lacking that immediate experience, the realized consciousness of one who has attained, who has been initiated into the Most High, we cannot have a genuine revelation, an authentic Drama of the Mysteries. The revealer must have made the journey, before he can tell authentically of the way. He must be in the full mystical sense an Initiate.

There is, therefore, a special significance for students of Theosophy, in the declaration of *The Secret Doctrine*, that "old Aeschylus was an Initiate, and knew well what he was giving out," when we come to consider certain of his

plays as Dramas of the Mysteries. Aeschylus was born at Eleusis, 525 years before our era, and a formal accusation of revealing the Eleusinian mysteries was brought against him before the Areopagus. But *The Secret Doctrine* suggests that the revelation made by Aeschylus was concerned, not with Demeter or Ceres, the central personage of the mysteries at Eleusis, but with the sacred allegory of Prometheus. Aeschylus wrote three dramas with this theme: *Prometheus Bound*, *Prometheus Unbound* and *Prometheus the Fire-bringer*, of which only the first has come down to us; of the second, we have a bare outline, while of the third we know practically nothing.

The Secret Doctrine makes a profound study of *Prometheus Bound:*

"The *crucified* Titan is the personified symbol of the collective Logos, the 'Host,' and of the 'Lords of Wisdom' or the Heavenly Man, who incarnated in Humanity. . . . Zeus represented in the Mysteries no higher a principle than the lower aspect of human physical intelligence—Manas wedded to Kama; whereas Prometheus—the divine aspect of Manas merging into and aspiring to Buddhi—was the divine Soul. Zeus, whenever shown as yielding to his lower passions, is the Human Soul and nothing more—the *jealous* God, revengeful and cruel in its egotism or 'I-am-ness,' . . . 'The lower Host, whose work the Titan spoiled and thus defeated the plans of Zeus,' was on this Earth in its own sphere and plane of action; whereas the superior Host was an exile from Heaven, who had got entangled in the meshes of Matter. . . . This drama of the struggle of Prometheus with the Olympic tyrant and despot, sensual Zeus, one sees enacted daily within our actual mankind; the lower passions chain the higher aspirations to the rock of Matter, to generate in many a case the vulture of sorrow, pain and repentance."

The whole study should be read and pondered over, and the drama of Aeschylus with it. Of the three parts, we have only the first, wherein is depicted the spirit of man chained and bound by the Enemies already enumerated, the Enemies which spring from unregenerate man himself; the spirit of man straining toward liberation. Aeschylus has given, in majestic symbolism, the history of the binding of that spirit, and has foreshadowed the redemption. When Prometheus says of himself:

> "Behold me
> Fettered, the god ill-fated,
> The foeman of Zeus, the detested
> Of all who enter his courts,
> And only because of my love,
> My too-great love for mankind . . ."

he reveals the oneness of the immortal Self with Divine Humanity; he records something of the toil of the Masters in the work of Humanity's liberation.

Plato was one of those, we are told, who had passed through the Gates of Gold. Plato's books are full of the Mysteries, and contain many explicit references to the Mysteries. Yet there appears to be no one of Plato's dia-

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logues that is in form a Drama of the Mysteries. The Trial and Death of Socrates describes the Via Dolorosa, but without the Resurrection. When we come to the history of the Master Christ, which our last reference suggests, we have not so much a Drama of the Mysteries, as the enactment of the supreme Mystery, with the precedent Temptations, and the hard trials of the three years' mission; not the symbolic record, but the Reality. The Apocalypse is rather a Drama of the Mysteries, a symbolic record of spiritual experience.

Whether or not the sixth book of the Aeneid is a true Drama of the Mysteries has been debated for generations. It would appear to introduce us to a phase of the subject upon which we have not yet touched. The accusation brought against Aeschylus, that he had revealed the Eleusinian Mysteries, may remind us that the word is used in two senses: first, the actual divine experience, the great Initiation, through which the Spirit of man becomes one, in consciousness and power and love, with the Eternal; in that Initiation, the Spirit of man is the Eternal. This is the true Mystery.

But, before this profound experience, and as a preparation for it, there are symbolic representations of this experience, such as the ceremonies at Eleusis; and, as a third step, we may have a graphic description of these symbolic ceremonies. Such a description, the sixth book of Virgil's Aeneid would appear to be; not, therefore, a record of spiritual experience; probably not the work of an Initiate at all.

The mention of Virgil in connection with the Mysteries brings us almost inevitably to Dante, and the *Divina Commedia*. The first thing to be noted is that Virgil does not complete the threefold journey; he does not ascend to the Celestial World. It would seem, then, that Dante thought of Virgil as one who had a human knowledge of the Mysteries, not a divine knowledge; that he had not passed through that supreme spiritual experience, that complete entry into the being of the Eternal, which we think of as the great Initiation.

To speak with confidence of these tremendous realities would be presumption; but Dante reveals the Divine with a sureness of touch, that indicates direct experience. Only true spiritual vision could have created these lines:

"'Tis the essence of this blessed being to hold ourselves within the Divine Will, whereby our own wills are themselves made one. So that our being thus, from threshold unto threshold throughout the realm, is a joy to all the realm as to the King, who draweth our wills to what He willeth; and His will is our peace; it is that sea to which all moves that it createth and that nature maketh."

So of all that Dante says of the Divine World, the realm of the Eternal; it has the ring of authenticity, the stamp of immediate experience, that Virgil seems to lack. We should be inclined, then, to think that Dante is an Initiate, while Virgil is not.[1]

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[1] N. B. *Initiate* does not necessarily mean *Master*.

It may seem strange that, in the *Divina Commedia*, there is no dominating representation of the Master Christ, as Krishna, for example, dominates the *Bhagavad Gita*. There is one fugitive reference, among others, in the eighth Circle of the Inferno: "Our Lord demanded nought but 'Follow me!'" There is the symbolic figure in the Pageant of the Earthly Paradise. There is the Light in the supreme realm of the Paradiso.

This reticence is in all likelihood due to profound reverence; but it is also true that the Master Christ may be thought of as permeating the whole poem, because Dante sees human life as we may conceive that Master sees it.

There is, in the Inferno, the life of the unregenerate will, obdurate in sensuality and disobedience; that side of human life which Zeus typifies in the story of Prometheus; those qualities and powers that can never enter Heaven. Then, in the Purgatorio, the painful task of transmutation and redemption begun by that complete reversal of the obdurate will, which brings the escape from Hell. Finally, the will redeemed, become one with the Divine Will, the individual losing himself to find himself in the Eternal. It would be difficult in all literature to match Dante's living revelation of the ascending spiritual realms.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, Shakespeare is bracketed with "old Aeschylus the Initiate" as a Sphinx of the ages. He is cited with Plato, as one who passed through the Gates of Gold. There has for centuries been a haunting sense of mystery about him, which has been the impelling force of the myth-making that has centred round him. A good many years ago, a student of Theosophy put forth the theory that *Hamlet* was a true Drama of the Mysteries, and there was this to support the theory, that it repeated the age-old theme of the lawful king and the usurper, with the passionate struggle to overthrow and cast out the usurper.

The parallelism was worked out in detail. The murdered king, representing the Higher Self driven from the throne by egotism, appeared only when the usurping king was asleep or drunk. Polonius was the lower human reason, Ophelia, the personal emotional nature, both meeting death in the fierce conflict. Hamlet, the Soul straining toward liberation, wages an agonizing battle against Doubt, and, though he slays the usurper, perishes himself in the inconclusive contest. That there is more than a tinge of mysticism in Hamlet, is universally admitted; his soliloquies have been accepted as the supreme expression of the struggling mind.

More recently, a thoughtful and valuable effort has been made to sustain the same thesis with regard to *The Tempest*, by Colin Still, in *Shakespeare's Mystery Play*, published in London in 1921. Summing up his case, the author says:

"Broadly considered, the meaning I have ascribed to *The Tempest* is certainly not one which is in the smallest degree peculiar in itself and inconsistent with the history of the drama up to Shakespeare's time, nor is it one which makes the Play utterly unlike any other masterpiece of art or literature. There is nothing odd or fantastic, nothing that the trained intelligence im-

mediately and instinctively resists, in the essential idea I have sought to establish—namely, that Shakespeare wrote a dramatic version of the one theme which has appealed unfailingly to the imagination of mankind through all ages. There is nothing contrary to reasonable expectation in the argument that such a work must inevitably be found to contain points of resemblance (whether intended by the Poet or not) to those parts of the Bible, of the pagan mythology and ritual, of the writings of Dante and Virgil and others, which demonstrably deal with the same great theme. Nor can it be denied that there is a singular fitness in the suggestion that the zenith of the drama, as represented by the climax of Shakespeare's power, was marked by a Mystery Play corresponding very closely to the ancient religious ceremonies with which the early art of the theatre was allied."

There are two main elements in the author's argument. First, there is a gathering together of many fragments concerning the ceremonies called the Mysteries, which have come down to us in the Greek and Latin classics, and which were brought together in Warburton's eighteenth century effort to prove the same thesis for the sixth book of the Aeneid. A consistent, interesting and, on the whole, very convincing attempt is then made to show that, in *The Tempest*, all these signs and passwords of the Mysteries, so to speak, are used correctly, in their right places, and with their true mystical meaning. Second, there is a philosophical study of the spiritual essence of the Mysteries, avowedly based on the theosophical teaching of the Seven Principles, including the "four bodies," as set forth in the *Mandukya Upanishad*, though that most mystical text is not named. The author seeks to show that *The Tempest* conforms not only to the verbal passwords of the Mysteries, but to the spiritual tests also; that it does, in fact, describe the way of liberation, the entrance of the individual Soul into the Oversoul.

There is also, to sustain the mystical view of *The Tempest*, the consistent portrait of Prospero as the Magician, almost the Adept, and, to crown all, the superb expression of the Oriental doctrine of Maya:

> These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits and
> Are melted into air, into thin air;
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

Are we, then, to say, on the basis of *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, both of which can be consistently interpreted in terms of the Mysteries, that Shakespeare is

an Initiate, as we may say that Dante, or Aeschylus is an Initiate, that Shankaracharya is an Initiate, that the revealor of the *Bhagavad Gita* is an Initiate; and that *The Tempest* is a Drama of the Mysteries in the same sense, and to the same degree, that the *Katha Upanishad* is a Drama of the Mysteries?

Let us consider first what we have called the signs and passwords of the Mysteries. Regarding these, we may quote Conington's analysis of the famous attempt of Warburton to prove that the sixth book of the *Aeneid* was a record of initiation:

"The circumstances connected with initiation were one thing, and the grand secret itself another: and while the latter has been so successfully preserved as to have perished with its depositaries, the former meet us openly in ancient literature, in allusion or in detail, so that we may be sure that they were perfectly at the service of any uninitiated poet who chose to avail himself of them to garnish and authenticate his narrative."

To what Conington says regarding the "grand secret" we shall presently return. In the meantime, we wish simply to make the point that what Conington says of Virgil, may be equally true of Shakespeare: "the circumstances connected with initiation" were largely available for his use. Shakespeare may not have been a skilled classical scholar, but he had an immense knowledge of the substance of classical literature; beginning with the Renaissance, it was in the air, and Shakespeare's works are saturated with it. The author of the very thoughtful study of *The Tempest* does not undertake to show in detail the ways in which Shakespeare may have gathered the fragments of technical knowledge regarding the ceremonies of the Mysteries, which are to be found in the poem; but there is no great difficulty here. Shakespeare was familiar with Plutarch's *Lives*, in the English version of Sir Thomas North, who translated the French of Amyot; it is not difficult to believe that Shakespeare may also have had access to some version of Plutarch's treatise on *The Mysteries of Isis and Osiris*. Or, to put it more generally, the research into the traditions of the Mysteries which was possible for Warburton in the eighteenth century, was equally possible for Shakespeare, or for some scholar among his many friends, perhaps even Bacon himself, in the early seventeenth, though the ferocious spirit of persecution may have made it expedient to preserve greater reticence.

Going somewhat deeper than the catchwords and phrases of the ceremonies, to the spiritual content of the Mysteries, there is much evidence, which is being constantly added to, that no period, either before, during, or since classical times, has been without knowledge of the Mysteries, both as ceremonies and as spiritual realities. There are, for example, the traditions of the Freemasons; there are schools like the Rosicrucians, of whom the Aryan Master already quoted writes: "These expound our Eastern doctrines from the teachings of Rosenkreuz, who, upon his return from Asia dressed them up in a semi-Christian garb intended as a shield for his pupils, against clerical revenge." Traditionally, this was about a century before Shakespeare's birth. During the reigns of James the First and Charles the First, the doctrines of the

Rosicrucians, avowedly based on the Mysteries, attracted much public attention and excited keen controversy. Robert Fludd published his well-known *Apologia Compendiaria Fraternitatem de Rosea Cruce* in 1616. In Elizabeth's time, although discussion of the subject was not carried on quite so publicly, Europe was honeycombed with small "secret societies" of scholars, avid of knowledge, who studied everything they could lay their hands on, exchanging information widely, and particularly anxious to explore the secrets of Greek, Roman, Arabic and Jewish authors who referred in any way to the Mysteries, or to the correlated subjects of the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir Vitae. It is certain that there were branches of these societies or "schools" in Shakespeare's England, and it is entirely possible that Shakespeare may have belonged to one or more of them. His powerful, many-sided intellect, open to all impressions, gathering materials from all possible sources, and at the same time free from dogmatic bias, makes that quite credible.

It is easy to believe, therefore, that Shakespeare may have written a drama conforming to the plan of the Mysteries, and embodying the signs and passwords of the Mysteries, and that he may have done this of deliberate purpose.

Is Shakespeare, therefore, an Initiate? To begin with, how are we to understand the declaration, already quoted, that Shakespeare had passed through the Gates of Gold? We may understand it best, perhaps, in terms of the definition given in that wonderful treatise itself:

"The Gates of Gold do not admit to any special place; what they do is to open for egress from a special place. Man passes through them when he casts off his limitation."

It is truer, perhaps, of Shakespeare than of anyone in all literature, that he has cast off his limitation. He transcends his own personality so completely that it is in fact a subject of debate among scholars, whether the personality of Shakespeare had any existence. He has taken into his vast, sensitive intellect, all the men and women of all the ages, from the dawn of Hellenic civilization in the days of Theseus and the Heroes, through Homer's Troy, later Athens, the Egypt of the Ptolemies, Rome of the Kings, of the Republic, of the Empire, many European lands through many centuries; all these men and women are equally near to him; neither race, creed, caste, colour nor sex is a barrier; neither space nor time. He has cast off his limitations. In that sense, he has passed through the Gates of Gold. Perhaps this is the reading of his riddle, as "intellectual Sphinx."

To come back to what Conington says about the "grand secret" of the Mysteries. We do not agree with him that it has perished, or that it can ever perish, if we are right in thinking that the supreme secret is the unity of the Soul with the Oversoul, of the Spirit of man with the Eternal, not as a doctrine formally conveyed, but as a profound experience, to be gained only through the intermediation of Masters, in the great Initiation of the Lodge. On that basis, to have passed through this experience will mean a spiritual illumination, a transformation of consciousness, which will reveal itself in such a spirit, let us say, as that of Dante, and, on a much greater scale, in the spirit

of Shankaracharya, of the Buddha,—a spirit of wisdom and fervour and love and power, a spirit of Divinity revealed in humanity.

Certain qualities of this spirit, it seems to us, Shakespeare conspicuously lacks. Where is the religious passion in him that inspires Dante? Where is the living intuition of Divine Humanity? From one sonnet, we may quote:

> Then, Soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
> And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
> Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
> Within be fed, without be rich no more:—
> So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
> And death once dead, there's no more dying then.

This, it may be said, if pushed far enough, will lead us to the *Elixir of Life*; but did he push it far enough? Is there more here than the understanding of a luminous intellect, which understood to that degree all human life? Is there the transformed, divine consciousness, which is the "grand secret" of the true Initiate?

The answer is, No. For all his transcendent genius, he lacks that fine spiritual quality which is the hall-mark of the Initiate of any degree. His emotional and intellectual powers are beyond question. His inner knowledge is second-hand.

It is not necessary to make a plea for the spiritual content of the *Divina Commedia* or the *Upanishads;* the impossible task would be, to prove them anything else. But it can hardly be maintained that *The Tempest* reveals the consciousness become divine, though it may follow a consistent plan that symbolizes it. But the ultimate Real is not there, though the symbol may be: at least so it seems to us.

There is, then, this high hope, this divine Reality, announced by the supreme Scriptures, the spiritual lining of our human life. Now, as always, living Masters of wisdom and power and love are ready to help the pilgrim, making their life the bridge for him to pass over; now, as always, there is the invitation, insistent, perhaps, as never before.

FRAGMENTS

IF we live in overcrowded hours, why complain of lack of time?

We could as well live in God's ample leisure.

If we live in overheated dwellings, why complain of lack of air?

We could as well pace the high tablelands of noble thought.

If we live in fetid cities and the lairs of men, why complain of lack of angels and beatitudes?

There are the Snows, the Everlasting Heights, the Solitudes where Masters find their home!

You say to me: I cannot wander forth. I am bound and chained by duty and by circumstance. I long for freedom, but it cannot be.

I say: Not so. No duty is a chain, it is a wing; and when a man is free in heart and mind, lord of himself and of his inmost soul, circumstance is his servant, and all bonds turn into scaling ladders for his feet. Even the outer semblance passes away. The only thing that binds is wrong desire; that conquered, man is free.

It has been said, we pay in minutes for Eternity. God gives the coin. So we pay for greatness with our smallness, and, the price paid, we are slaves no more.

You say to me: Then I leave men behind, seek my own will and way, let them perish that I may gain my own advantage?

I say: Not so. You cannot do it. Leave one duty unfulfilled and it will bind you through a crore of years, tripping your feet at every untrue step. But be not bound to your duties, bind them to yourself, master of them through perfect obedience to what they represent. You cannot circumvent the Law; but making your will at one with it, you conquer. It is not men that you must leave, it is yourself. When you have left self behind, you will have left all men, left all that belongs to self. You will dwell apart, as Masters dwell. Then, for the first time, you will be able to minister to men, for the first time to serve them—perhaps even, if your self-surrender be complete, prove fit to save them.

CAVÉ.

PLOTINUS

II

Remember that the Soul is the Creator of all living things, that it breathes the breath of life into every being of earth and sea. But do not forget that the Soul remains apart from that to which it gives order and movement and life; for the existence of the creature has a beginning and an end; but the Soul is immortal and cannot suffer change.

ENNEADS, 5. I. 2.

Since the nature of the Soul is divine, be assured that you will attain the Divine through the Soul; by self-identification with the Soul, you will ascend to the Eternal World. You need not seek for the One Self far from your self, nor is there in reality any barrier between yourself and That. To reach the Self, take as your guide the higher principle of the Soul, which is in essence one with Divine Wisdom.

IBID., 5. I. 3.

THE doctrine of Plotinus implies a constant correspondence and an uninterrupted interchange of force between macrocosm and microcosm, between the One Self and the Soul of man. "Every part of the Universe is in sympathy with every other part: touch one chord of a lyre and the other chords will resound,—much more must the Universe resound to every action of any of its parts, since the Universe embraces all things, even opposites, reconciled in perfect harmony" (4.4.41.).[1]

No creature is really a separate and isolated entity. Individuality is not a division of the One Self, but a form of its Self-consciousness, and the whole of the Self is present—whether latent or expressed—in every individual form. Individual action is an emanation of universal force. To express the same idea in modern terms, human evolution is an aspect of universal evolution. If the essence of the Universe be divine, so also must be the essence of man. The goal of man, the purpose of his evolution, is to come to full consciousness of the Divinity in which he participates, as does every being.

Man is in his inmost nature one with the First Principle of the Universe, which is the undivided Self of all creatures. To the three manifested principles of the Universe—Wisdom (*Nous*), World-Soul (*Psuche*), and Nature (*Phusis*)—correspond the Monad or Spirit (*Nous*), Soul (*Psuche*) and Body (*Soma*) of each individual human being. By virtue of his individuality, every man is destined to express some unique aspect of Being, which no other creature could possibly reveal. That uniqueness gives its mysterious value to individ-

[1] The quotations given are from the *Enneads*.

uality, distinguishing but not separating the Monads from one another. There are countless stages or phases of individual being, the human phase being that which, for obvious reasons, now concerns us most.

The object of evolution is that the Monad may become personally conscious of its identity and reality as the Self. For that purpose, the Monad produces an emanation of itself, the Soul or Ego, which in turn emanates a series of bodies or vestures, through the mediation of which it comes into relation with Nature. Nature is the field of polarized forces, and the first rudiments of personal consciousness are born in the sensations of the physical organism, which is compelled to readjust itself at every instant to a constantly changing environment. As this simple physical consciousness becomes more intense and sustained, it awakens by induction corresponding psychic faculties and powers. Finally the Monad, the divine individuality, comes to conscious birth, in response to the growth of personal consciousness in the higher principle of the Soul. The perfect man is a trinity of Spirit, Soul and Body, and not until he is conscious in all three of his principles, can he transcend the limitations of physical and psychic existence and share the divine consciousness of the One Self. The goal of all action (*praxis*) is contemplation (*theoria*), leading to union (3.8.5.).

The goal is positive. Man is to enter into living possession of his true nature. But his task has also its negative side. He must withdraw his personal consciousness from the false psychic nature, which he has formed by brooding over the images of physical life. The ethical philosophy of Plotinus is an effort to face the terms—positive and negative—of the problem of man. It is the translation of his conception of the Universe into a rule of discernment between good and evil.

Doubtless the enigma of good and evil cannot be solved by the intellect in final terms, for it proceeds from the primordial mystery of free-will. The gods have free-will, but are above evil. The lower kingdoms are below the plane where free-will becomes active; therefore they are outside the operations of moral evil. Between the god and the animal is man, as free as a god to follow his destiny or to reject it, but encompassed by the evil which he has created.

Although Plotinus does not deny the fact of evil (*kakon*) in human life, he refuses to admit that evil possesses any reality in its own right. He is not a dualist, representing Light and Darkness as rival powers, like Ormuzd and Ahriman, sharing and contesting the governance of the world. Darkness derives from Light whatever potency it has. There is a saying of St. Thomas Aquinas, that the Devil, in so far as he is powerful, is divine. Plotinus describes evil as "necessarily bound round with bonds of beauty, like some captive in fetters of gold, so that men, even in the presence of evil, may still not be wholly deprived of the reminiscence of the Beautiful and the Good" (1.8.2.).

Darkness is the limitation or diminution of Light, and, if there were no Light, could not have even contingent or potential existence. In a very general sense one might say, with certain Buddhists and Gnostics, that all manifestation is evil, since manifestation seems to differentiate the One Sub-

stance and thus infuses into consciousness the awareness of separateness and pain. Plotinus himself shows some sympathy with this view, when he associates evil with matter (1.8.5.). But more often he asserts that Cosmic manifestation cannot be anything but good, since it is the necessary unfolding of Being, which is moved by its own power to emanate individuality and life as perfect images of Itself. "The purpose of the appearance of the Universal Soul in the world and, similarly, of each individual soul, is to achieve the perfection of the world, since it is necessary for the world to contain living creatures equal in species and number to the monads of the Divine Host" (4.8.1.).

Evil—at least in its concrete meaning—is a limitation of Being, in so far as it is a perversion of Being, and there is no absolute necessity for its manifestation. At a certain stage of the evolution of self-consciousness, the Soul receives from its parent principle an influx of free-will, which is the key to its personal immortality. Free-will gives the Soul the right to choose for itself whether it will attach itself to animal life or will become consciously divine. In exercising this responsibility, it may make mistakes. The self-will or wrong desire, which causes the Soul to blunder, is evil, because it is a denial of the unity of the Self. The penalty and correction of this fundamental sin is unwisdom, suffering, and death (3.1.4.9). But how could personal immortality be possible in this Universe, if there were not also the possibility of death?

"We must admit the existence of unmixed Good as the basis of reality. But we must also acknowledge the existence (within ourselves) of a nature containing goodness mixed with something alien or evil. What is evil for the Soul? It is evil for the Soul to identify itself and to be in contact with that which is below itself. It is because of that contact that the Soul experiences appetite, pain and fear. Indeed, fear is felt by us neither for the Soul nor for the body, but only for the composite nature (*suntheton*), which results from the descent of the Soul into the body. A false view of the world arises within the Soul, when the Soul exiles itself from the Truth, which is its proper home, and thus ceases to be purely itself" (1.8.15.). Evil comes into existence when the Soul adopts as its own the appetites of the body and directs them to ends for which they were never intended; nor can these appetites be called evil, unless they are shared by the Soul. Or, as one might say, evil is wrong self-identification. The composite nature, which is born of wrong self-identification, is the material soul (*enulos psuche*) or false personality, the vehicle of evil desires and also the medium whereby the fallen part of the Soul becomes aware of the effects of evil. "Pleasure and pain are felt by the composite nature of Soul and body; they are known, but not felt by the higher part of the Soul (which remains detached from the body") (6.4.18.).

"What is man? Is he the body? No, man is not the body. Before the generation of the body, he existed on high as a pure spirit, a Seer in union with Universal Being. Formerly, we formed parts of the Divine Host, parts which were neither circumscribed nor limited, belonging to the undivided whole of Being. Even now, we are not really separated from the Divine Host: but the

spiritual man in us is joined by a lower (psychic) man, who desires to be independent of the spiritual man. Because this psychic man encompasses our consciousness, we are now dual beings. We are no longer only conscious of our spirituality. Often, when the real nature slumbers in us, we identify ourselves wholly with the psychic" (6.4.14.).

"The higher principle of the Soul does not approach matter nor lower its vision; it remains pure and is in accord with Wisdom. The lower principle emanates from the higher, but is no more than its reflection. Because the lower Soul identifies itself with matter, it lacks the perfection of the higher, and its actions are not guided by Wisdom. We say that the lower Soul contains matter, because it contemplates darkness (*skotos*). . . . By virtue of its union with the body, the lower Soul participates in the discord and confusion (*ametria*) of matter. It loses its reasoning power and is blinded by the passions of the body" (1.8.4.). The passions, thus shared by the Soul, are perversions alike of the divine consciousness of the Soul and of the healthy activities of animal life.

"What led our Souls to forget their Father and, though united with Him, wholly His, to cease to know both themselves and Him? Their misfortune was caused by the spirit of rebellion (*tolma*),[2] by the creative power (*genesis*) and the primal differentiation (*prote heterotes*) of the Universe, and by the thirst for separate existence (*to boulethenai de heautōn einai*). They sought pleasure in self-expression and self-assertion; therefore they went far astray. And now they have wandered to so great a distance (*apostasis*) from the Father, that they are even ignorant that they derive their life from Him. They have attached themselves to external objects and have disdained their divine birthright. To souls in this state, two appeals must be made. The Soul must be shown the shame of the things which attract it, and it must be taught and reminded of its noble race and rank" (5.1.1.; also cf. 4.8.5.).

Liberation is possible for the Soul, because the body is really separable (*choriston*) from it, and because the Soul does not wholly descend into the body. "The divine part of the Soul never leaves the Divine Host" (6.7.5.). "The souls of men fell into generation, because they had gazed at their images in matter, as in the mirror of Dionysus.[3] But the noëtic part of the Soul does not descend with the psychic part, so that, even though their feet touch the earth, their heads rise above the sky. And their father, Zeus, pitying their afflictions, made their bonds mortal" (4.3.12.). The problem for the lower part of the Soul is, therefore, to detach itself from the false personality, the image of the body, which it falsely regards as itself, and to attach itself to the noëtic principle. In other words, the noëtic principle must assume the personal self-consciousness, which is now wrongly attributed to the image of the body.

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[2] *Tolma* is a term "used by the Pythagoreans to designate the *dyad*, the first being which dared to separate itself from Unity" (Bouillet: *Les Enneades de Plotin*, III, 3).

[3] This is, doubtless, a reference to some rite of the Mysteries. "It is said that Dionysus, establishing his image in a mirror, pursued it, and thus became distributed into the universe." (Olympiodorus, quoted by Thomas Taylor, *Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, p. 148.)

Once this transfer has been made, evil ceases to be, for evil arises from the sense of separateness, and the awakened Seer is above the sense of separateness. Though still individual, he turns towards the One Self, the Eternal, with an ever-increasing knowledge that he is That. All the powers of the Universe support him, work with and through him, for he is in essence a universal being. He coöperates with Nature, instead of resisting her, this coöperation being true freedom, as the gods alone are said to be truly free. (Cf. 6, 8, 21).

The ethical doctrine of Plotinus is thus based upon the double necessity of purification (*katharsis*) and of training in contemplation (*theoria*). The two processes proceed simultaneously, but it is more logical to consider purification first, since it is upon this that most emphasis is laid at the beginning of the way.

There are two stages of purification, the unconscious and the conscious. It is the Divine Law that every vice brings its corrective punishment, and human laws and conventions come to the support of Nature, since they reflect, however imperfectly, man's age-long experience of the causes of pleasure and pain. These social laws are the basis of the practical or civil virtues (*politikai aretai*).[4] Until these can be practised with some force and discretion, it is useless to attempt more, for they are the standards of common decency and honesty. Practical morality serves the ends of the Logos, for it wears away the grosser desires of the psychic man. Incidentally, the virtuous are rewarded by escaping Hell and by a more favourable incarnation next time. It may be noted that Plotinus believed in Karma and Reincarnation.[5] "Each Soul proceeds into the bodily image, which has become the object of its ruling passion" (4.3.13). The Soul "goes where it longs to be," and receives—even in Hell—only the fruition of its desires. Hell is not only an after-death state, but is the cycle of rebirth in the body (1.8.13). "So long as the Soul is bound to matter, it passes from sleep to sleep. The true awakening of the Soul is from all bodily life" (3.6.6.).

The ardent seeker after Truth cannot rest content with worldly goodness, which consists in a relatively blind and unthinking obedience to human conventions. He will not, indeed, scorn the civil virtues, but, even while practising them, will seek their interior meaning and will try to read their correspondences with Divine Laws, for "the virtues in the Soul run in a sequence corresponding to a sequence in the Divine World, where exist the archetypes of all virtues. . . . Thus, the paradigm of temperance is the Self-concentration of the spiritual man; his power of right action is the model of the art of 'minding one's own business' (*oikoiopragia*); his pure aspiration and unflinching detachment from matter correspond to our ideal of courage. Doubtless, the philosopher will practise the homely virtues common to all men, but he

[4] The word, *arete*, in no way signifies the negative goodness, too often suggested by the English word, "virtue." *Arete* is moral force, the "active excellence," which makes one a useful, as well as a "good" citizen.

[5] One passage (3.4.2.) is often quoted as proof of his belief that the human soul may transmigrate into a lower animal body. But the passage in question is certainly more easily interpreted as symbolical and humorous.

will test them by standards revealed by meditation upon the spiritual prototypes of all virtues. He will strive to give a concrete form to those prototypes, which are still only abstractions for most men. For instance, he will not be content with the temperance which is only moderation, but will seek to separate himself from all attachment to the image of the body. Seeking the reality, of which virtue is the image, he will model his conduct upon that of the gods rather than upon that of good men" (1.2.7.).

Because the philosopher sees more clearly what he ought to do, his standards must be more rigorous. He bravely faces suffering, privation and death, even when apparently undeserved, for he is thereby tested in the detachment which he professes, and he knows the instructive value of suffering. He will never blame the gods for his misfortunes. "In this world, as in a drama, it is not the Soul within, but the outer phantom of the man, which gives itself up to lamentations and groans. How many human creatures think only of externals and do not realize that their preoccupations are no more serious than those of children! If we cannot help joining to some extent in this child's play, it is well to remember that it is child's play, and that the real man is not concerned with the results thereof" (3.2.15.). It is not by chance that one man is born a master and another a slave. If there be much injustice in human relations, the innocent sufferer is often less the victim of his oppressor's brutality than of his own supineness and effeminacy.

It is easy to object that the philosopher carries his detachment too far; that, by his own admission, it does matter greatly how we act at every moment. There is some intrusion here of the fatigue and pessimism incident to his century. But he is speaking especially of detachment from the objects of ordinary hopes and fears,—such as are engendered by the desire for riches or the dread of illness. The philosopher cannot remain an ordinary man; he seeks liberation from the very things to which the ordinary man is attached. It cannot matter to him, so far as his real life is concerned, whether he is a slave like Epictetus or an Emperor like Marcus Aurelius.

There is danger, of course, that detachment from his own cares may make the philosopher equally indifferent to the troubles of others. It may be urged, with much justice, that the serenity of the Neoplatonist is too self-centred, too negative. By wrong self-identification, man has moulded a false personality, which must be dissolved; and the practice of virtue is a sovereign remedy for purging the Soul of its evil humours. But right action has also a positive, creative function. It brings an increase of personal knowledge and power to the Soul, since it is an affirmation of the Soul's being, foreshadowing and corresponding to a phase of Divine Being. Because of the unity and interdependence of all souls, right action cannot illumine one soul, without at the same time shedding its radiance upon all. We have been told of the force which is released and given form by the least act of an adept.

The rationale of right action is outlined in the *Enneads*, but Plotinus does not make clear its positive, practical application. At this point, he is too abstract, too much the professional metaphysician. As Dean Inge says sug-

gestively: "The notion that the dignity of work is determined by the subjects with which it is concerned, and not by the manner in which it is executed, is a mischievous error which Greek thought never outgrew."[6]

Evil is only an episode of the Great Cycle, a back-eddy in the stream of evolution from the mineral to the Divine. All beings in a state of nature seek the Good, and all growth of form and power and personality, is the outer expression of their inner quest (3.8.8.). It is the nature of the Universe to emanate a manifestation of itself, and it is the nature of the manifested to return to the Unmanifested from which it emerged. Through the operation of this dual movement the consciousness of the Universe becomes personal and individualized, without ceasing to be eternally one. As personality becomes more intense, the vestures, through which it is manifested, become more definite and are endowed with a greater and more varied capacity for action. This evolution of form reacts in turn upon consciousness, which is awakened, increased and made more personal, as it comes to know the forms which it creates.

The Good is the same for man as for all creatures, since it is the One Self, by which all things are endowed with individuality, life and form, and with which all things seek some phase of conscious union. Man must seek the Good, whether he will or not, but it is most important to realize that he must seek it as a man, not as an animal or a vegetable. This injunction is not as foolish as it sounds, for the lower kingdoms of Nature have not disappeared in human nature. The body of man is part animal, part vegetable, part mineral. The human element is provided by the Soul, which descends towards the body; but the Soul should remain distinct and separate from the body, for the body is only a medium through which knowledge may be gained by the Soul. As has already been said, evil arises when the Soul adopts as its own the desires of the animal body, and magnifies and distorts them psychically.

The animal seeks the Good and earns its reward by instinctively performing its natural functions. But it does not know what it is doing. That is one great difference between man and the animal. Man is destined to seek the Good self-consciously, although, to that end, he must still use the functions of the animal body. He must first conceive abstractly and then realize personally, his union with the Most High.

Plotinus uses the word, *theoria*, to express the universal procession of all beings towards the Good, the return of the manifested to the unmanifested. It is usually translated as "contemplation," which is not an ideal word for the purpose, since it suggests something static and passive, whereas *theoria* is revealed as the compelling force in evolution, as the immanence of the Highest Power in its creation. Perhaps the nearest English equivalent is "aspiration." All things *aspire*, more or less consciously, towards the One, and in man there enters into aspiration every faculty of the Soul, including will, desire, intellection and action. Man should rank as a conscious "aspirant." It is signifi-

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[6] *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, II., 189.

cant that the term, *theoria*, was borrowed from the Greek Mysteries, "where it was applied to a dramatic or sacramental spectacle. . . . Pythagoras is said to have been the first to give it a real meaning, as the contemplation not of the sacrament, but of the underlying truths which sacraments symbolize."[7]

Plotinus devotes the last books of the *Enneads* to an exposition of the quest of the human Soul, and it is fitting that his concluding words should point towards the ultimate stage of the quest, when the last barrier of separateness is worn away, when it becomes impossible to say whether the individual has become the All, or the All has become individualized. It is probable, even if we discount Porphyry's testimony, that Plotinus speaks from a personal experience, which was the fruit of long meditation and which involved the training of certain faculties, "which all men possess, but few use." It has been urged that his whole attitude is so impersonal and abstract that he may only be repeating the teaching of Ammonius Saccas. But some men tend always to give an abstract expression to their experiences, however concrete these may be. In any event, Plotinus only professes to offer a general outline or scheme of the mystic way. Whosoever desires, he says, may test the truth for himself. Furthermore, Porphyry asserts that Plotinus and two other students pledged themselves not to make public certain details of the instruction which they received in the School of Ammonius Saccas (*Life of Plotinus*, 3).

The Eastern influence in Plotinus is clearly indicated in his method of preparing the Soul for the interior vision. The first of the quotations which follow, might almost be taken from a Vedantist. "He who seeks to know the Divine Self, must look deeply into the nature of his Soul, into the divine part of his consciousness. He must separate from himself, first, the body and the power of the (lower) Soul, which moulds the body; then he must cease to identify himself with his faculties of sensation, appetite, and anger, and, in general, detach himself from all those passions which incline the Soul towards mortality. What is then left is that part of the Soul, which we call the likeness of the Divine Mind, and which emanates from Wisdom, although it remains attached to that from which it emanates" (5.3.9.). "The ancient sages, seeking to procure the presence of the gods by erecting temples and statues, seem to have possessed deep insight into the nature of the Universe; they knew the All-Soul to be a principle ever at our call. It is proper to prepare a place in which some phase of it may be received, and for that purpose the nature should be brought to the condition of an untarnished mirror" (4.3.11). "We must invoke the Divinity not by the utterance of words, but by raising our souls to him in prayer. The true way to pray is for the Soul in solitude to advance towards the Self in its solitude. To contemplate the One, we must retire into our inner sanctuary and there remain in quietude" (5.1.6.). "Imagine a transparent sphere, within which one sees the sun, the stars, the earth and all living creatures. And now keep the form of the sphere, but suppress the ideas of mass and extension and banish from your meditation all ideas

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[7] Inge, *op. cit.*, II., 178–179.

derived from matter. Then invoke the God who made the world of which you have formed an image and implore him to enter into it. . . . Indeed, this sphere of the world extends to infinity and is infinite in its powers, and so great is the One Substance that its parts also are infinite" (5.8.9.).

In proportion as the neophyte gains some measure of detachment from his lower vestures, he acquires without effort the power of advancing in true knowledge. For he is drawn forward by the compelling force of love, the same force which creates the worlds. He seeks union with the "First God," though not for the conscious bliss which union brings, for he has lost all desire for personal reward and, in place of that old desire, has come the burning love of Truth for its own sake. He has only one concern,—to identify his personal will and mind with the Divine Will and Mind. Eternal life, wisdom, power and bliss will come to him, but he never seeks these for himself.

The object of such devotion may seem abstract, but the devotion itself is the most concrete experience attainable by man. Some writers on mysticism have spoken of the mystic's experience as "union with the Absolute." But how can anything in manifestation be in union with the Absolute? Doubtless, in one sense, every existent thing is the Absolute already and cannot possibly be anything else, but how will it ever—even in the Eternity of Eternities—become personally conscious of the whole of Absoluteness? As *Light on the Path* says: "You will enter the light, but you will never touch the flame." Plotinus is within reason, since he only implies that man can unite himself personally with the One Self, so far as is possible during this cosmic period and upon this planet. The student of Theosophy may attribute a definite form to the One Self, by identifying it, for the present cycle, with the divine Hierarchy of the Lodge, the One Self of Humanity.

It must be repeated that the life of the Seer becomes more intense as he becomes more self-consciously divine. He does not concentrate upon the fruits of action, but his power of effective action, even upon lower planes, becomes greater. The measure of his conscious union is the measure of his power, for his "creative force (*logos*) remains in its own place, apart from that which it creates. . . . The force which is associated with action and oversees it, cannot exhaust itself in action" (3.8.3.). Even at the beginning of the contemplative life, there is a constant exercise of powers far transcending any of which the mortal can conceive; but there is no strain. It is the "spirit in love" (*nous eron*) which moves the Seer and which makes all things easy. The action of the mortal is feeble, because it proceeds from a "feeble contemplation."

The bliss of the Seer is not abstract and cold. Even mortal love brings its measure of happiness, fixed in a brief apparition of beauty. But mortal love is embittered by satiety, whereas immortal love is the source of an ever-increasing delight. The beauty of the Divine does not pass away, for its glory is not limited by space and time, nor is it perceived confusedly and intermittently, as if it were a quality of matter.

"Only he who has seen the Good knows how beautiful it is. We must ap-

proach its presence, leaving behind all earthly vestures, as the initiate enters the sanctuary. He who has not yet seen Truth, desires it as the Good; he who has seen it, desires it as the Beautiful. If we behold That which gives all creatures their perfection, if we rest in the contemplation of That and become like That, what other beauty can we need? Being the supreme Beauty, the First God makes those who love Him beautiful and lovable. That is the great end, the supreme aim of the Soul; it is the lack of that vision which makes man unhappy. He who would see that vision must shut his eyes to terrestrial things, not allowing himself to pursue corporal beauties, lest he share the fate of Narcissus and immerse his soul in deep and muddy pools. And yet we may gain instruction by contemplating noble things here on earth, and we should especially meditate upon noble deeds, which derive their beauty from the Divinity. Thus, we shall press on continually, remembering that the Soul can only see the Beautiful, by becoming itself beautiful" (1.6.6–9.).

All knowledge below the noëtic plane is fragmentary and confused. At worst it is mere opinion (*doxa*), based on unassimilated sense-experience; at best, it is the fruit of discursive thought or reason (*dianoia*), which tests, selects and arranges the data of experience, but which can never be certain and final, because, even in the most impressive logical constructions, we can never be sure that our premises include all the facts which are needed to determine the truth.

But the Seer knows Reality by direct contact. He sees the Real, because his personal consciousness is in union with the Real. "When the Soul turns away from visible things, it manifests its beauty and becomes a true image of the Divine. Then the One Self appears in the Soul, for there is nothing between them, nor are they two but one. . . . Then is the vision blended with the object seen, and that which was before objective becomes for him the state of seeing, and he forgets all else" (6.7.34–35.).

This is the Unitive Way, the Life of the Kingdom of Heaven. To enter upon it, the Seer must paralyze the false self and become conscious as the Real. He is rapt in ecstasy, "standing outside" his body, but his trance does not bring loss of control over the body. He may continue to live as a man of earth, although his centre of consciousness is no longer in the body, but above it. He moves his vehicle, instead of being moved by it. Perfect Samadhi is perfect Self-possession.

Plotinus admits his inability to describe the bliss of union. Words too often give an image, not of that bliss, but of its psychic counterfeit. If the mystics try to describe the ineffable, it is only to awaken the Soul and to inspire its devotion (6.9.4.). Really to know the Unitive Way, each man must tread it for himself.[8]

"The One Self does not dwell in any one place; it is present everywhere to him who can touch it. But we cannot touch it, if we be distracted by any image. As matter must have no qualities of its own, to receive the forms of

[8] The concluding quotation is an abbreviation and paraphrase of 6.9.7–11, the last chapters of the *Enneads*.

things, so must the Soul be formless, to receive the plenitude and illumination of the Self. The Divine, as Plato said, is not far from anyone. It is present with all, though they know it not. But he who has learned to know himself, will know also whence he is.

"Bodies cannot be closely associated with one another, but incorporeal things are not separated by bodies; they are held apart not by distance, but by unlikeness. Where there is no unlikeness, they are united. The Self, which knows no unlikeness, is always present everywhere; we are conscious as the Self, only when we, too, know no unlikeness. We always move around the One; if we did not, we should be instantly dissolved; but we do not always contemplate the One. Like a chorus, we stand round the leader, though our attention is often diverted by external objects and we sing out of tune; but when we turn toward him, we sing in harmony.

"Thus encircling the One, as in a choral dance, the Soul contemplates the fountain of life and wisdom, the source of being, the cause of perfection, the root of consciousness. But wisdom, being, and consciousness do not flow out of the Self in such a way as to diminish it, for we are not dealing with physical quantities. These things, which proceed from the Self, are co-eternal with the Self, because the Self is not divided among them, but is present everywhere equally. We are not separated from the Self, though the bodily nature intervenes and draws us towards itself, for we maintain our being in the Self, which never withdraws. But we are more truly alive, when we turn towards it, and in this lies our well-being. Then we rest in it, beyond the glamour of evil and absorbed in the Divine Vision. Our life in this world is but a falling away, an exile, and it is natural for the Soul to love its true Father, from Whom it descended, and to desire union with Him. Therefore we must hasten to depart hence, to detach ourselves as much as possible from the body, to endeavour to embrace the Self with all our being. Then we can see God and our real selves, as far as is permitted; we see ourselves glorified, pure, subtile, ethereal, full of light. We become divine or, rather, we know ourselves to be divine. That is the kindling of the flame of Life.

"Why, then, does not the Soul remain in Heaven, when it has been lifted there in ecstasy? Because it has not yet wholly left its earthly dwelling. But the time will come, when it will enjoy the vision without the hindrance of the body. The part of the Soul which is now hindered, is not the part which sees God. We ought not even to say that it sees God, since the Seer is himself that which he sees, if, indeed, in that state we may distinguish at all between the Seer and the Seen. The Seer does not see himself and another. He becomes another and ceases to belong to himself, for he is possessed by the One Self. Therefore is this vision so hard to describe. How can one describe as other than oneself, that which in the vision appeared as one with the Seer? In that union the Seer retains no consciousness of separateness. Nothing stirs in him, neither anger nor desire nor reason nor even personality. Caught up in ecstasy, tranquil and alone with the Self, he enjoys an imperturbable calm.

"The Seer knows that he sees the Self, because he and the Self are one.

Possessing in himself the radiance of the First Principle, he knows the First Principle of the Universe. When the Seer moves towards the Good, he comes not to something separate from himself, but enters into himself, finding in himself the presence of the One Self (of all beings). He ceases to be conscious as a thing apart; he ascends above existence, in communion with the One. If a man perceive himself in the Self, he has in himself the perfect likeness of the Self, but, if he pass out of himself, he will ascend from likeness to union, and will have reached his journey's end.

"When he descends from that vision, he can again awaken his power, and, adorning himself with virtue, can reascend to the place of Wisdom and, yet above Wisdom, to the Father. Such is the life of the gods and of god-like men,—a liberation from earthly bonds, a life that takes no pleasure in material things, a flight of the alone to the Alone."

There exists a feeling among modern scholars, that the *Enneads* are so obscure that it is a waste of time to read them. It is to be hoped that the above quotations will have proved that this feeling has nothing to rest upon. Plotinus was a powerful and lucid thinker, who set himself the task of demonstrating the unity of all consciousness. As a prudent experimenter he began with the only *datum* of which he could feel absolutely certain—the reality of his own Soul—and then, passing deeper into his being, he proved for himself the indissoluble union between the individual Soul and the Oversoul, the Self of all that is. He tried to reveal the way to the knowledge which he had gained, for he had discovered that the knowledge of union is bliss, and he desired others to share that bliss. There was no question of forcing his vision upon others by emotional magnetism, or by the dogmatic assertion of facts which are unknown to most men. He proceeded in the spirit of intellectual integrity, to induce men to experiment for themselves, as he had experimented.

It has been suggested that Plotinus, born in a Western body, had an Eastern mind, and that he used the existing terms and formulæ of Greek philosophy to illustrate the introspective methods of the Indian mystics. In his own place and time, he strove to reconcile science and theology, reason and intuition. If we truly seek union with the Self as the goal of our being, we shall not think of reason and intuition as faculties which contradict each other. They will appear as instruments ready to our purpose,—the one as necessary as the other. Intuition without reason is senseless, like the instincts of the brutes. Reason without intuition is reduced to the mechanical repetition of syllogisms, from which the life has departed. Both alike are subject to illusion, unless they be tried and confirmed, at each stage, by action, by disinterested work, as an expression and service of the One Self in all beings.

S. L.

THE LANGUAGE OF PARADISE

Then he hears the language of Paradise and perceives what is passing in the mind of the ant.

LANGUAGE, as we ordinarily think of it, is a very unsatisfactory affair. We have a thought that we want to express, and we grope around in our minds for a set of words by means of which we can build, like an elaborate and most clumsy mosaic, a picture that to our eye looks more or less like our idea. How it appears to the listener is, of course, often a totally different matter; a fact of which we may be entirely unconscious. Yet one of the commonest of complaints against High Heaven is, that Omnipotence, when it has occasion to communicate with us, or when we think it ought to have, does not use the clumsy and inadequate words of our everyday speech.

Not long ago I was talking to a friend who thought that he had lost his faith. He said that on two occasions in his life he had urgently needed help. He had felt that without it he could not go on, and he had prayed with all his heart, pouring himself out in a passionate appeal for strength to go through with what he had to do.

"Surely," he said, "if there had been a God, he would have heard and answered me."

"But," I said, "you went on?"

"Yes," he answered, "I got the strength somehow."

Heaven must have smiled, though he did not.

We may be certain of one thing. When Omnipotence wishes to convey an idea, it does not have to resort to our roundabout and uncertain methods. If we had the power to implant an idea directly in the minds of our hearers instead of through the medium of word-symbols, surely we would do so. Yet one and all of us long to have our prayers answered by an audible voice, speaking our native tongue. Everyone probably has wondered why prayers are not answered that way. Among other reasons, we feel that if we once received such an answer our faith would be surely established. That was what Dives felt, from the flames of hell: if he could only speak to his brothers, surely they would repent. The answer to Dives was that they had Moses and the prophets. If they would not hear them, they would not hear though one spoke from the dead. We all have our "Moses and the prophets." If our lives and surroundings, the beauty of flowers and birds and sunlight, the majestic order of the stars, do not speak to us with the voice of God, would we hear this voice though words came from the air to our ears in answer to our prayers? Man himself can make words come from the air, and though the mind clamours loudly for "material proof," it has no difficulty in doubting the evidence, however clear, of the senses. It is only the evidence of the soul

that has the power to silence this clamour of doubt, only the soul that can say *I know.*

It is the soul that knows, and it is to the soul that the Masters speak. Our task is to clear the channels from our everyday consciousness to the consciousness of the soul, and to find there the knowledge and the strength we seek and for which we pray. The guidance and power are truly given in answer to our prayer, but given to the soul; and it is through the soul that we must seek it. If we heard voices, or if a Master himself came and stood before us visibly, should we ever learn to turn within for the light that must guide us? Or should we not for ever after turn our backs on the only path to the spiritual world, the path through the depths of our own hearts and souls, looking and hoping always for another outer appearance, another outer voice?

To the extent to which the channels from the soul to the personal consciousness have been cleared, do we share in the knowledge of the soul, knowing our true desires as they exist in the depths of our real selves, conscious of our immortality and of what it is that is befitting an immortal; conscious, at last, of the Great Ones above us and of their call to us to serve. That which is "right," right thought and right action, tends to clear these channels. That which is wrong, "sin," obstructs them. It is in this fact that the rationale of ethics lies, and this is the fundamental reason for the insistence of all religious systems on purification. It is also the reason for the statement that our beliefs are the results of our conduct, materialistic conduct leading to materialistic beliefs, and selfless action to knowledge and faith. Until the channel is cleared it is impossible to tell the source of the many conflicting voices, the many contradictory desires that clamour in our minds, each claiming to be "our" real desire. We all want to be sweet-tempered, and we all say ill-tempered things; presumably because we think we want to do so, for certainly we do not have to do so for any other reason. But we are getting away from our point.

When we pray for light and the prayer is answered—as all prayers are answered,—we may think of the soul as receiving light and strength, and as striving to pass them on to the personal consciousness. These often reach us, distorted more or less as the case may be; but, reaching us as they do from a part of ourselves far deeper than our ordinary consciousness, it seems to us that it is only from within ourselves that the light and strength have come. Hence the clamour against High Heaven for not answering our prayers. We may be sure that the Masters, who have themselves turned back from the threshold of infinite bliss in order to help mankind, are constantly trying to aid and teach us in every way that would be permanently helpful. We do not yet know the language in which they speak directly to their disciples, those whose inner senses are sufficiently developed for them to hear and understand. The soul of man can express through music and art what it cannot say in words, and yet the finest music and the most beautiful of paintings are only the reflections, the coverings, of spiritual things. In fact, they are beautiful to just the extent to which the light of the spiritual world shines through

them. There is no beauty where there is no spirit. The Masters are masters of all of life, of music and art as of all else, and what they do, they must do perfectly. There are hints here and there that lead one to think that at times they speak to their chelas in pictures. If so, the pictures surely would be beautiful beyond our conception, and their voices the most wonderful music. Some day we may see and hear; but one does not ask babies to understand Rembrandt or Beethoven. That, however, does not mean that one cannot talk to babies. It merely means that one uses a different method.

Heaven, no doubt, uses many methods with us. It may, perhaps, implant in our souls the essence of that which it wishes us to grasp directly, leaving it to our own minds to give it form,—that "veil without which it is so difficult for us to perceive reality." This may be one reason why the saints and mystics so often give the form and colouring of their own religion to the great truths which they have received. The saints have to some extent at least cleared the channels from the soul to the mind. Where this has not been done, the thousand and one desires of the personality which clog the passage, may twist and distort the message out of all semblance of truth in the process of transmittal. Then, for truth to reach our personal consciousness, it becomes necessary for the "Lords of Compassion" to use another language in speaking to us. "The universe exists for the purposes of the soul," and all that comes to us of whatever sort must contain Heaven's message to us. Why else should it come, or be in the world at all? It is a platitude that we can only learn through our own experience. There are some who learn through the mistakes of others, but there are not many; and even those few rarely learn as completely as when they have lived through a mistake of their own. Certain things must be worked into the fibre of our being, and the only way to obtain that result is by living them with all our being, not simply hearing them with our ears. St. Teresa speaks of the fact that the most learned philosophers could not understand sweet taste if they had never tasted anything sweet, whereas the most ignorant peasant who has eaten sweet things knows the taste exactly. Surely, therefore, if High Heaven wished to explain sweet taste to us, it would not talk about it, but would so adjust the outer circumstances of our lives as to make us eat something sweet. Then we should really grasp what was meant. The same principle must apply to more important knowledge. It takes longer, to be sure, to live through an experience than to listen to an explanation of it, but the results are obviously more thorough; and, so far as we can see, Providence is not pressed for time.

The circumstances of our lives seem so hard and rigid that it is difficult for us to grasp how easily they can be manipulated so as to give us just the lessons we need to learn. It is easy to forget that the world was designed for that very purpose, the development of character, of the soul. There is a machine used for setting type, known as a "linotype," equipped with a key-board like a typewriter, on which the operator can write whatever he wills to say. As he strikes the various keys, the machine casts corresponding letters on metal slugs, which emerge at the other end of the machine ready for the printing

press. The slugs are hard, rigid and as unchangeable as iron. A materialistic gnat, contemplating them, would scoff at a suggestion that the human will could alter letters, or have any effect on them at all short of their destruction. Yet the operator, writing, let us say, a school book, could have written a different lesson as easily as the one he wrote. The machine was designed for that very purpose, and is as flexible as language itself. If the operator of a man-made linotype finds no difficulty in making it express what he wills to say, it does not seem likely, to say the least, that the Creator of the universe finds it any more difficult to express His will on the machine that He has created for that purpose.

Our gnat, if a philosophical, scientific gnat, might draw many conclusions from his study of the linotype, besides his deduction that the words on those metal slugs could not be changed by the human will or, let us say, by human prayer. He would, no doubt, in his inquiry into their causes, postulate a "First Cause" as "unknowable," and, setting that aside, would investigate the immediate causes of the phenomena he saw in his universe, to wit—an orderly, intelligent result proceeding from mechanical causes. What caused the letters? Investigation would show that a wheel, moved by a wire, caused the letter "A,"—a purely natural phenomenon. Did will or intelligence move the wire? Not at all. Further investigation would show that the first wire was moved by another wire, and it in turn by another wheel. As far back as gnat science could go, it was all the result of purely natural causes. "There is no sense in praying for rain. It comes or does not come from purely natural causes."

When a linotype operator wishes to write something—whatever it may be—he does not *interfere* with the operation of his machine to do it. He uses the methods designed to accomplish that particular purpose. So—we may safely assume—the Creator, in order to answer a prayer, does not interfere with the orderly processes of nature, nor set aside natural laws—which, after all, can only be His will in action—but uses them as the linotype operator does. The result of the action of intelligence and will appears as "natural" in the one case as in the other, the only difference being that in the lesser instance it never occurs to us to deny the intelligence.

The analogy of the linotype helps to make clearer another point that is very difficult for our minds to grasp. It has often been said that the great things are accomplished by those who work unknown and unseen; that the intelligent, faithful performance of the smallest duties, with intention of serving, may be of more value to the cause of the Masters than many army corps; that in this way moulds are formed that can be used to influence the whole course of the world. If we could once really believe this, it would give an incentive to our efforts and an interest to our duties that ought to carry us far. Yet we know that when a great idea has once been set in its mould of type, millions of copies can be struck from it with the utmost ease. There is no reason to assume that moulds of psychic type are any less potent than physical moulds. But again we are digressing.

The events that come to us come charged with meaning. We have only to look for this to see that it is there, long as it may take us to grasp more than a fraction of its significance. Unfortunately we get so absorbed in noting whether these events are what we want or not, whether they contribute to or detract from our pleasure, our comfort or our vanity, that we have no eyes for anything else. Therefore it happens that our lessons have for the most part to be repeated over and over and over again, until at last some inkling of their meaning begins to dawn through the fog of our misplaced attention. Whether these needed lessons happen to bring pleasure or pain, is, from one point of view, as unimportant and beside the point as whether a boy likes or dislikes learning his multiplication table. It is there to be learned, not liked. When, for instance, a man has grown self-centred and callous to the sufferings of others, the only way in which he can gain the greater sympathy and understanding he needs may be for him to suffer acutely himself. Once gained, the power to sympathize may be his throughout eternity. A painful illness lasting a month, a year or a life-time, is, when we stop to think of it, little enough to pay for the possession of a great power for all time. So, sooner or later, in this incarnation or another, the illness comes and life teaches its lesson.

If it be true that God speaks to us through the events of our lives, there surely is nothing of greater importance for us than to try to understand what is said. Yet how often do we try to see lessons in each day's happening, or look at them from any other point of view than that of our own pleasure or annoyance? Obviously the reason is that, for the most part, we do not believe there are any lessons there. There is one way to find out. Try and see. For a week, or a day, test each event that comes, and discover if it contain instruction—in character building, for instance.

It has been said that all beauty, of mountains and rivers, of flowers and sunsets, is designed to be a door opening into the spiritual world. Just as a statue or a picture is a door through which, by sympathetic appreciation, we pass to the thought or feeling of the artist, so, in looking at natural beauty, one should seek to enter into the meaning of the Creator,—to understand and to feel His meaning, as we try to do with a work of art. That which has beauty is never meaningless, though the meaning may escape our formulation. The realization of this fact makes natural beauty infinitely richer. In the same way, the realization that the events of our lives have significance and purpose takes away much of the sting and pain from what is unpleasant, and adds immeasurably to the richness of experience. Most people complain bitterly of the dreary routine of their days. So may a child, who has not yet learned to read, grow weary of the monotony of arranging his twenty-six alphabet blocks in meaningless combinations. But a book-lover in a library does not find the combinations of those same twenty-six letters monotonous in the least. Those who have learned to read, even a little, of the language of Paradise, do not find life monotonous; nor do they find it unjust. Understanding brings trust, and with trust a growing gladness and peace.

J. F. B. M.

MADAME BLAVATSKY

EVERY period has its gentleman with a duster (unless it happens to be a lady), and the early Eighties in England were rather rich in this form of history-making,—Du Maurier furnishing an incomparable pictorial accompaniment. People had leisure in those days; it was essentially the era, not of pink teas, but of drawing-rooms—drawing-rooms that did not call themselves salons, but where people met and talked, and lions gently roared, and other clever kindly people, looking on, took notes and told us all about it. Among these clever kindly people there stands out quite delightfully the beautiful Australian writer, Mrs. Campbell Praed, known as Justin McCarthy's collaborator in *Our Book of Memories*, in which the letters are McCarthy's and the introduction and comments Mrs. Praed's; and as the author of that capital book *My Girlhood in Australia;* and less well known by her several novels, which seem to our latter-day taste a bit over-stippled and lacking in flexibility. After all, it is dialogue that dates a novel, and in an age when no one talks except to get a few words in edgewise because other people are out of breath, we are restive with speechifying in books. This may be why, when you ask, "Who *is* Mrs. Campbell Praed?"—you get a vague, "She was a writer, but I can't remember what she wrote"; and also why you might not have the patience to read *Affinities* all through, unless you had been warned that, under the name of Madame Tamvaco, Mrs. Praed gives a most interesting impression of our own Madame Blavatsky, and no less. The student of Theosophy to-day hears much of the later Madame Blavatsky—undefeated and undefeatable, but ill to the point of death, forsaken by all but a handful, discredited in the eyes of the world. We may know, but we forget, that she was not only seeress but *grande dame*, and that when she deliberately chose to enter the great world as part of her plan of campaign, she did so in both characters. Such a record as we have in this book of Mrs. Praed's—detached, impartial, unmalicious—makes this very clear to us.

Affinities was evidently written when Madame Blavatsky's vogue was at its height. The social world had adopted both her and the new vocabulary. Each season has its equivalent of Shakespeares and the musical glasses. In this day it was furnished by occultisms and esotericisms, and there was much easy mention of Mahatmas, of reincarnation, of odic force, and such small matters. And here, for a brief while, Madame Blavatsky passed on her way, foreign but friendly, remote but accessible, gracious but formidable. Perhaps it will be as well to let Mrs. Praed set her own stage:—

"It was June. Everyone was in London and Mrs. Borlase's Thursday evening receptions were in full swing. The quaint detached house in West Kensington was a long way off for the votaries of fashion, but they came nevertheless

in droves. There were Belgravian dowagers, fashionable beauties, a celebrated actress, men with decorations, society men, and men who never went anywhere else, littérateurs, scientists, and art patrons. Mrs. Borlase reconciled all nationalities and all diversities of interest. Noticeable among this crowd was a strange and striking-looking woman. This lady was certainly not English, but it would have been difficult to guess her nationality. Her appearance carried speculation beyond the bounds of Europe. She might have been either of Asiatic or American origin, for in her physiognomy there was a sort of combination of the Oriental type and that of the American Indian. She might have been sixty, but looked younger. Her features were decisively yet delicately cut, the sensitive lips giving a character of alertness to her face, which was contradicted by the full Eastern-looking eyes. These were extraordinarily large, luminous and dreamy. They seemed to draw the light into themselves, like a jewel of which the depths appear unfathomable. There was nothing shifting or unsteady in their gaze, though they were capable of a variety of expressions. They were almost too inscrutable, too determined, to be absolutely beautiful. They compelled awe rather than admiration, or indeed any human feeling. The whole countenance, if somewhat wanting in feminine sweetness, was noble and mysteriously attractive. Its strangeness was perhaps partly due to the vivid contrasts of colouring it presented. The eyes were so dark, the skin so rich an olive, the lips so red, and the eyebrows and lashes so black; while the hair, of which there seemed an immense quantity, was white and crisp like snow. She wore a kind of headdress of white lace carelessly knotted round her throat. But here beauty and stateliness ended."

It is understandable that Mrs. Praed could not make her description of Madame Blavatsky exact, either as to face or figure, and in what follows she permits herself the extreme of license. Any description of Madame Blavatsky's personal appearance betrays that the impression made by the noble head and face was contradicted by a shapeless and unwieldy figure. In order to veil her sketch in decent indirectness, Mrs. Praed has chosen to convey this discrepancy by an exact descriptive topsy-turvy, at the same time permitting her readers to feel her own recoil of distaste, a distaste shared by many of Madame Blavatsky's strongest admirers. But when those who have reason to bless her name learn that her unconventional *tournure* was her one concession to incurable illness, the recoil is all the other way. Furthermore, other times bring other manners, and one may be born too soon for comfort. In these days weirdly untrammelled ladies pass muster at social functions, but not so forty years ago, when to appear in a London drawing-room without a "figure" was to excite first consternation and then comment. In her own way Mrs. Praed rounds this dangerous corner:—

"The figure, covered by a robe of lustrous white satin, fitting loosely and veiled in lace, was shrunken and deformed, the shoulders rising almost to the level of the ears, while the pigmy stature was in painful disproportion to the

grandeur of the head. There was a singularly pathetic want of harmony between the misshapen body, and the soul which looked out of those wonderful eyes. A number of people pushed toward her and drew her into animated conversation. Her manner and gesticulations were distinctly foreign, and partly contradicted the impression of dignity which her face gave in repose. Her form swayed. She waved her thin flexible hands [Madame Blavatsky's hands were of distinguished and unusual beauty] and her eyes seemed to grow larger and to dart forth lightning as she talked, apparently upon a subject more than commonly interesting. A beautiful and sumptuously gowned, but worn and wasted young woman approached, and Madame Tamvaco motioned her to a seat beside her. She looked her through with her great witch-like eyes. 'I have not forgotten you,' she said in a deep, rather harsh voice, with a very un-English intonation. 'You used always to wear white, and now you dress in red and flame colour. It is I who am in white—I whom they call a witch; and you are in witches' garments. Why do you not keep to your white? Why did you marry that man?'

"'Madame,' said the girl calmly, though she was trembling, 'I married my husband because I loved him.'

"'Hear!' exclaimed Madame Tamvaco, in an accent more of pity than of irony. 'This fever which wastes the flesh and burns the soul is Love! You would not listen to me. You did once come to this misshapen woman for knowledge, and I said "Wait. Grope in the darkness till your eyes can bear the light. Never yield your will to another. Fly any influence which threatens to overpower it. Cling to your intuition as you would cling to your Saviour." They were golden rules but you would not heed them. You would be another Eve. And see—you come to me again and I can do nothing for you.'

"'Madame Tamvaco,' was the reply, given with unexpected dignity, 'when I need your help I will not ask for it in a place like this.'

"This seemed partly to amuse, partly to please, the strange woman. 'That is good. I forget I am in a world where masks are necessary and where the nakedness of your minds must needs be covered. For me there are no masks. It is strange to see you all as you are and to see the thoughts which project themselves from you. I will tell you,' she added, looking round the group, and speaking no longer to the girl only, 'I will tell you something which perhaps you do not know, but which is true—as true as that you have each an astral body, though that is a fact these scientific gentlemen deny.'

"'I am not scientific?' cried Madame Tamvaco. 'Herr Klein will not admit me into his brotherhood of physiologists! Is that so? Well, listen to me. There are a great many mysteries which puzzle you scientists but which are no mysteries to me. They are facts, and I have been shown the natural laws which govern them. For example, can you physiologists tell me anything about the spleen?'

"'Its functions have not been clearly defined,' said a man who spoke with a German accent.

"'Then when you have learned to define the functions of the spleen, which

we consider the storehouse of vital energy, you shall tell me why the laws of nature will not permit me to have an astral body. And now, I will inform you that around each of you there is an aura—an emanation, in which your thoughts, the likeness of those upon whom your imagination dwells, and the influences which prompt your words and actions, take shape and are visible to the eyes of those who see. And I can assure you that if you believed what I said you would be sorry that I should see through the foul and mephitic atmosphere which encompasses some of you to whom I am speaking—the noxious things you have attracted to yourselves.'

"'You are frank, Madame,' said the German, 'but will you submit to a test of your powers of thought-reading?'

"'You call me a charlatan and a fraud because I will not ring astral bells and perform juggling tricks to please you,—if you desire it, Herr Klein, I will tell you what I see.'

"She bent and spoke to him rapidly in German. He looked visibly discomposed. 'Cease, Madame. That is sufficient.'

"'Well?' she asked with triumphant irony. 'Am I a clever thought-reader? But let me light my cigarette.' She puffed reflectively for a moment, then threw the cigarette away. 'Why did I not bring my own *tabac*,' she cried. 'Ah, my good Klein! it is possible to have an aura which will bear the scrutiny of clear eyes, but now you shall leave me. I will talk to you no more.'

"Two gentlemen then drew near. 'Madame Tamvaco,' said one, 'may I have the pleasure of making you acquainted with Major Graysett. He is good material—a convert worth making.'

"'I am not a propagandist, Mr. Margrave,' said the Seeress coldly, 'or you would have been converted, as you term it, ere this. Take care. No one ever yet escaped me who rashly plunged into the maelstrom of my psychic influence. However, for the present, I am not concerned with you. Come and see me Saturday when I receive. . . . I am charmed to know you, Major Graysett,' she added with a very winning smile. 'You will see that I have both my exoteric and my esoteric meanings.' . . . .

"Presently as the crowd around her thinned, the young woman who had talked with her early in the evening again drew near and sat beside her. 'Tell me,' she whispered passionately, 'what is it that you see in me? What has changed me? Is it a crime to love? What have I done to be so tortured?'

"An expression of the tenderest compassion swept over Madame Tamvaco's face, and she spoke in a dreamy tone, unlike the brusqueness of her former mode of speech.

"'Do you not know that each life we live is but one step of the Infinite Ladder which we must all mount to reach Eternity—but one day in the ages through which each spirit must pass to gain the Perfect Rest! You Christians preach that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, and never was more sublime truth conveyed in simple words. But you fall into the error of taking an infinitesimal part as the Great Whole. The night of dreaming which follows day is not the harvest.'

"'Tell me how I can learn from you. I have no faith. I am in chains. While I am with you light seems to come. You refused to teach me once. Will you refuse again?'

"'My poor woman!' said the Seeress, 'I can teach you but I cannot deliver you. Salvation is within yourself, in the immortal spirit over which neither man nor elementary thing can gain complete mastery. While there is in your heart the faintest aspiration after good, the faintest loathing of evil, it will never forsake you. You came to me once, and I warned you. I could do no more. I knew the peculiarity of your organization exposed you to perils you were not capable of comprehending. To rise to the spiritual plane, meant for you an ordeal for which in this life you could never be prepared. Safety lay for you on the physical plane, and in the development of your human sympathies and heart love—a different thing to the mere magnetic attraction which could only reawaken in you a dormant sense, and which is the medium of approach to your worst enemies. How can I in a few words expound the most subtle of philosophical problems? Listen. Evil and good are the two opposing forces, which, acting and reacting upon each other, result in the life of the universe. The atmosphere around us is crowded with forces, currents, influences, intelligences—call them what you will—to which we are more or less sensitive, according to individual temperament and moral and physical conditions. In some the barrier which divides our souls from these invisibles, needs but the lightest touch to be thrown down. This may be done by the force of our own purified aspirations, or by the will of a strongly magnetic person dissimilarly electrified to ourselves, who has within himself the power of controlling those forces, and who, in proportion as he is pure or impure, attracts the malignant or the beneficent, not only to himself, but to the subject whom he has infected with his own magnetism.'

"'You are one of those unfortunate beings unprotected by a physical barrier, or by the strength and inherent purity of your own soul. Had you listened to the voice of your intuition, you would have fled from the man who is your husband, as you would flee from a foul vapour. To you he is deadly. He has the potentialities of a god or a demon. Ages to come will determine which. It is more than probable that knowledge will direct his will; and his aspirations—for he has the capacity to aspire—becoming gradually purified, may force him to choose the good. But with this, *you* have nothing to do. Your love for him has been mere physical attraction. You have never inspired him with one holy impulse. In marrying you, he did violence to his better self. You have never stimulated his yearning after the ideal even in its lower forms. Therein lies *his* hope of salvation. It is not *you* who have any power to influence his highest destinies.'

"She ceased. All this had been poured forth very rapidly and in a low, penetrating voice which seemed to come from far away, and yet pierced the very soul of her listener. Her eyes were strangely large and luminous, with a shadow of trouble in their depths; they gazed into space, as though there this mystic drama of conflicts and affinities was unfolding before her inner vision.

By some strange spell, it seemed as though these two were abstracted from the noisy throng,—with the effect that the transcendental utterances of the sibyl and the frivolous scene around were as separated worlds. . . .

"It was Saturday afternoon and Madame Tamvaco was at home to her friends. In a double sitting-room where several people had already gathered, she was seated in a large cane arm-chair placed in the draught of two windows. She was reading a newspaper, and fanning herself in an agitated manner, every now and then delivering a volley of ejaculations in some foreign language. She looked tired and ill, and was evidently in a state of nervous exasperation. Gathered round her was a little knot of scientific-looking men. These she began to introduce with a comprehensive wave of her fan. 'Professor Dowsett, Professor Woakes, Professor Borrodaile.' But the Professors were far too intent upon their own business to wot of introductions. Professor Dowsett, small, alert, with a note-book open in his hand, rushed up to another and asked in an eager aside, 'Have you had any phenomena?' proceeding to make a note of the reply.

"Margrave paused by Graysett and said in his dry, neutral tone—'You will not imbibe any wisdom from the fountain head to-day, if that is what you have come for. The Sibyl was in good form the other day, and rang some astral bells greatly to the edification of Professor Dowsett, who has brought his brother professors of the "Psychological Investigation" department to make a report. But the old lady is in a singularly impracticable mood. She has an indigestion, and the papers have been making fun of her.'

"Madame Tamvaco had now thrown herself back in her chair, and was rolling cigarettes with nervous energy, while the three professors maintained their positions round her in spite of new comers. Professor Dowsett, the showman as it seemed, looked uneasy and conscious of responsibility, while in persuasive accents he urged his request. 'Madame, will you not do something for Dr. Borrodaile? Will you not give him a proof of the reality of occult phenomena?'

"'What do you take me for?' cried Madame Tamvaco. 'Am I a juggler? Did you expect that I would make cups and saucers, and give a manifestation of electric bells in all your pockets? I cannot do it. I am ill. I am worn-out and ill-used. It's time that I disintegrated. I can tell you the world is not a pleasant place to live in when people write lies about you. . . . Now listen; I have devoted my life to a search for Truth. I, weak woman, weighted by bodily infirmities, less worthy than many of you here to be an instrument for the service of Humanity, I frankly tell you that I have clamoured till the door has been opened to me. I come forth to do my people good. What then? What do they call me? The Champion Impostor of Christendom! Oh, you Christendom! you are worse than the wolves. They only eat one of themselves when he has been killed by the others. But you—you kill a man first and then you devour him. Upon my word I am very good to you gentlemen,' she went on fiercely. 'You come here to question me; and I answer your questions, while all the time you call me to yourselves a cheat and an impostor.

I am not angry at that. But when you say my Masters are a fraud, my blood boils. I cannot bear it. Attack me if you will; but do not blaspheme against that which is sacred. Respect the faith of millions. Respect those mighty ones who tread in the fourth path of holiness; for *they* are holy.'

"As her enthusiasm intensified, her voice became sweet and bell-like, and the changes which took place in the countenance of this remarkable woman were astonishing in their rapidity and variety. They resembled the play of lightning upon a landscape which alternates between sullen gloom and dazzling splendour. She took a cigarette from the heap she had been accumulating, lighted it, and after a few whiffs, began to question Professor Woakes in a composed, candid manner, about certain experiments he had been conducting, on the effect of the electro-magnet upon the human body. Presently the American Professor broke in with repressed impatience—

"'And now, Madame Tamvaco, are we to have no phenomena? Not even a precipitation—a portrait produced without contact with the pencil? It is a promise.'

"'No,' exclaimed Madame Tamvaco. 'I have said before, I am not a conjurer. My Professor, I will keep my promise; but another time; not for these gentlemen who have brought their note-books, and who will go from me to Errington the medium, and say which is the greatest cheat. Errington is not a cheat; that I will tell you, though I do not like mediums. I have shown Professor Dowsett some phenomena; and that is not enough. Here is Professor —what is your name? Bor—Borrodaile. He is a sceptic. He is a disciple of your Huxley. He will not give to anyone but himself and his Huxley the right to think.' She addressed him fiercely, 'Well, what can I do to convince you? Would you believe if you had phenomena?'

"'I can't say,' replied Professor Borrodaile stolidly, 'it would depend upon the conditions.'

"'Would you believe if you saw me in my astral body?'

"'I must be satisfied first about what I had eaten for supper.'

"Madame Tamvaco glared at him tragically. 'Oh, Protoplasm! Protoplasm!' she cried; 'Huxley's Protoplasm! Why, you are the most sceptical sceptic I ever beheld. You are a worse doubter than Thomas Didymus. I assure you that you will go to the other extreme. That will be your fate. You will become credulous. You will turn spiritualist when you are a little older.'

"There was a general laugh, in which the Professor joined.

"'Well,' she said, returning to the attack, 'do you believe in Errington's slate writing?'

"'I cannot say.'

"'Do you believe he is a charlatan?'

"'I cannot say.'

"'What do you believe?'

"'I admit,' said Professor Borrodaile, 'that I am surprised. It is my impression that Errington is not a fraud, but at present there is no evidence

to convince me that the dead have the power of communicating with the living or that the spirit is capable of operating upon material bodies.'

"'It does not follow that because there are phenomena they are caused by dead people,' said Madame Tamvaco. 'There is an astral body, or there is not. If you admit the astral body which is invisible, you must admit that it can produce phenomena.' The Professor again stroked his beard and shook his head. 'You are sure that you have got a body?' sarcastically demanded Madame Tamvaco. 'I can make you invisible to Professor Dowsett if you please; for I will magnetize him so that he cannot see you. You will admit that you have a body, but you will not admit that you have a spirit.'

"'I have never experienced anything which could convince me that I have a spirit.'

"She held up her arms with a gesture of despair. 'Oh, you scientists!' cried she; 'I will have nothing to do with you. You have surrounded yourselves with an atmosphere so dense that you cannot see through it. You are caught in your own trap. You are behind the march of science, not in advance of it. Even if convinced you would not be honest enough to own it. You would be *chassé* from your society. Your fellow-scientists would shunt you. Ah! why not be honest? Why cling to the old prejudices? Why not rise and make a rush for knowledge and grasp it?'"

The voice dies into silence; the turned-back flash-light fades out. It lighted for us, for a moment, that mysterious figure—temperamental Russian and veiled prophetess; feeble woman and irresistible Fohatic Force; disregarded witness and unconquered Messenger of the Gods, whom we know as Madame Blavatsky.

L. S.

Genuine convictions do not show themselves; they prove themselves.

LAMARTINE.

THE CREST JEWEL OF WISDOM

Attributed to Shankara Acharya

VII

THE mighty sages who have cast away passion, who have cast away sensual feasts, who have gained quietude and control, knowing the Real in the supreme consummation, have reached the highest joy through union with the Self.

Therefore, discerning this supreme reality of the Self, in its own nature the sum of bliss, shake off the delusion built up by thine own thought, free thyself, attain, awake!

Through soul-vision which rests unwavering in the Self, behold the reality of the Self with the eye of clear illumination; when the truth revealed by the Scripture has been perfectly discerned beyond all question, doubt will not return again. (475)

In gaining the Self, which is truth, wisdom and the essence of joy, by freeing thyself from the bondage of the fetters of unwisdom, the Scripture, right reasoning and the word of the teacher are means of enlightenment, and the realization of the Self, inwardly attained, is a means of enlightenment.

Freedom from bondage, joy, wholeness of thought and happiness must be known by oneself; the knowledge of others is only inference.

As the Masters who stand on the further shore and the Scriptures reveal, let the wise man cross over through that wisdom which comes through the divine grace of the Lord, the Logos.

Through his own experience knowing his Self undivided, reaching the supreme attainment, let him stand in the Self, through the Self which is without separateness.

This is the meaning, this is the final word of the teaching of wisdom: the individual life is the Eternal, the whole world is the Eternal; to be established without sense of separateness in the secondless Eternal is liberation; this too the Scriptures declare. (480)

Attaining the supreme reality through the Master's words and the evidence of the Scriptures, and gaining union with the Self, with heart at rest, concentrated in the Self, his whole being unwavering, the disciple rested in the Self; then, intending his mind for a certain time on the supreme Eternal, rising, in perfect joy, he spoke these words:

Thought has ceased, activity of desire has fallen away, through the oneness of the Eternal and the Self, through illumination; I know not this; I know naught other than this; what is it? how great? It is shoreless joy!

Not by word can it be spoken, nor by mind can it be thought; the vast

expanse of the ocean of the supreme Eternal is filled full with the nectar of the bliss of the Self. Rejoicing like the rocky bed of a torrent suddenly flooded by the rains, drinking in each least drop, my heart rejoices now in the joy of the Self.

Whither has the world gone? By whom taken away? Into what has it dissolved? No longer do I behold it: a mighty marvel! (485)

What is to be put away? What is to be taken? What other is there, what distinction, in the mighty ocean of the Eternal, filled with the nectar of partless bliss?

Of the world, I no longer see or hear or know anything; I have become the Self, whose nature is being and bliss.

Honour, honour to thee, Master, mighty-souled, liberated from bondage, most excellent being, in thy nature the essence of eternal, secondless joy, mighty, a shoreless ocean of compassion.

As he who, wearied by the heat of day, is refreshed by the abundant beams of the rising moon, so in an instant have I gained the dwelling of the Self, the partless majesty and joy, the imperishable.

Rich am I, I have attained my end, I have gained liberation from the dragon of the world. (490)

I am without attachment, without members, without distinguishing mark, without partition; I have attained to peace, I am infinite, I am stainless, immemorial.

I am neither he who acts, nor he who experiences, I am beyond change, beyond ceremonial rites; I am in essence purified intelligence, I am unconditioned, ever blest.

I am other than he who sees, hears, speaks, acts, experiences; I am eternal, the innermost, beyond ritual acts, boundless, detached, the plenary awakened Self.

I am not this, I am not that, but the radiance in both, supreme, made pure; empty within and without, yet filled, the secondless Eternal, in truth am I.

The beginningless reality, like which there is naught else, far from the fictions of "thou" and "I" and "this" and "that," the fine essence of eternal bliss, the truth, the secondless Eternal, verily, am I. (495)

I am the divine Logos, who makes an end of hell, I am the Spirit, who takes the fortress, I am the Lord ; I am partless intelligence, the supreme witness, for me there is no distinction of "Lord" and "I" and "mine."

I am established within all beings through the Self of wisdom, secure within and without; I am both he who experiences and what is experienced, whatever was seen as separate before, with the thought of "that."

Within me, partless ocean of joy, manifold world-waves arise and sink again, driven to and fro by the winds of Glamour.

As a mirage this bodily form and the finer vestures are built up, and the worlds are brought into momentary being, just as in Time, which is partless, continuous, the ages, the years and seasons are imagined.

The superstructure injures not the firm foundation, whatever deluded, sinful

men may build; nor does the mighty river of water in the mirage moisten even a span of the dry desert. (500)

Like the shining ether, I endure through ages, like the sun I am marked by radiance, like the mountain I stand ever firm, I am shoreless like the ocean.

As the clear sky is not bound by clouds, I am not bound by the body; how then can I be limited by its modes of waking, dreaming, dreamlessness?

The vesture comes, the vesture goes, it works works and meets experience; the vesture withers and dies, but I remain, set firm like a mighty mountain.

Not mine are manifesting and withdrawal, since I am ever of one form undivided; how could he, who is of the essence of the one Self, without crevice or division, full like the ether, be subject to pain?

How can I be involved in righteous or unrighteous deeds, I, who am other than the powers that act, other than thought, without change, without form, partless, conscious of bliss? Thus the Scripture says: the Spirit is followed neither by good nor evil. (505)

Whatever thing, hot or cold, fair or foul, may touch his shadow, does not in the least affect the man himself, who is other than it.

The properties of what he witnesses do not affect the witness, who is apart from them, disinterested; just as the properties of the house do not affect the lamp.

As the sun which witnesses the act, as the fire which leads the conflagration, as the rope which holds what is raised, so is this Self of mine, dwelling on the summit.

I am not he who acts nor he who causes acts, I am not he who experiences or causes experience, I am not he who sees nor he who causes seeing, the Self am I, self-shining, secondless.

The Self stands steadfast like the sun; seeing its reflection perturbed when the vesture is perturbed, men of deluded mind attribute the perturbation to the Self, saying: I act, I experience, I am slain. (510)

Whether this inert body traverse the water or the land, I am not touched by the properties of these, as the ether is not touched by the properties of the jar.

All conditions, of actor or enjoyer, of evil or deluded, of inert or bond or free, are built up through the mind, and are not lasting realities in the Self, the supreme Eternal, alone, without a second.

Let there be ten, a hundred, a thousand transformations of nature; what are these changes to me? The sky is not stained by the lowering cloud.

All that is perceived, from the unmanifest to the material world, is reflection only; like space, beginningless, endless, subtile is the secondless Eternal; that, verily, am I.

Upholding all, illumining all things, cause of every form, penetrating all, yet untouched by all, eternal, pure, steadfast, without separateness is the secondless Eternal; that, verily, am I. (515)

Wherein all differing appearances are merged without remainder, of concealed nature, not to be approached by thought, in essence truth, wisdom, bliss, formed of bliss is the secondless Eternal; that, verily, am I.

Without act am I, without change, without division, without form, without separateness, eternal, underived, secondless.

I am in essence the All, I am the All, I have transcended the All, I am secondless, perfect, partless illumination, I am bliss, I am the inmost.

This self-conquest, sovereignty, dominion, through my Master's compassion, grace, might and favour, has been gained by me; obeisance to my gracious Master of mighty soul, obeisance to thee, and again obeisance.

I was wandering in the great dream forest of birth, decay and death created by delusion, day by day afflicted by many pains, stalked by the tiger, egotism; through infinite compassion awakening me from my dream, thou, Master, hast become my saviour. (520)

Reverence to the One, whatever it be! Reverence to that Light which shines universal, and to thee, king of teachers!

Beholding that excellent disciple bowed in obeisance, who had attained to the joy of the vision of the Soul, who had gained illumination, the lord of instructors, mighty-souled, heartily rejoicing, again addressed to him this final word:

The world is the expression of the thought of the Eternal, therefore all Being, everywhere, is the Eternal; thus behold it in all modes of being with serene understanding, illumined by the Higher Self. That Being which is everywhere beheld apart from form by those possessing vision, what else can be the Soul's garden of delight for the righteous knower of the Eternal?

What wise man would rejoice in empty things, rejecting the experience of that essence of supreme bliss? When the great, joy-bringing moon is shining, who wishes to behold a pictured moon?

For there is no satisfaction in experiencing an unreal object, nor any escape from pain; do thou stand satisfied, rejoicing, resting ever in the supreme Self, through the experience of that essence of secondless delight. (525)

Ever beholding that supreme Self everywhere, resting thy thought in the secondless Self, let the time pass for thee, mighty-minded, in the experience of the bliss of the Self.

Conceiving separateness in that partless Self of illumination, which is without separateness, is like building dwellings in the air; therefore, gaining supreme serenity through the Self which is ever secondless joy, rejoice in silence.

The Soul's supreme tranquillity, brooding in silence, dissolves the insubstantial buildings of the mind; from this, through the supreme Self, which is the Eternal, straightway comes joy in undivided bliss.

There is no more excellent source of joy than silence free from all mind-images, for him who has discerned the true being of the Self, drinking in the essence of the joy of the Self.

Whether walking, standing, sitting, lying down, or in whatever state, let the saint, possessing wisdom, freely dwell, rejoicing in the supreme Self. (530)

Neither place nor time nor posture nor position, or any other rule, is the cause of release from bondage; for the sage of mighty soul, who has attained to the Real, the illumination of the supreme Self is the rule of life.

What rule will avail, to know even an earthen pot, unless it be perceived? When it is perceived, there is clear understanding.

The supreme Self shines forth ever perfect, when it is perceived; neither place nor time nor ritual purification is needed further.

The realization that I am Devadatta needs no certifying; so is it with the knowledge that I am the Eternal, for him who knows the Eternal.

What illumination does he need, for whom the world other than the Self, light as chaff, is revealed by the radiance of the Eternal, as the whole world is revealed by the sun? (535)

What can illumine that Light whence Vedas, scriptures, ancient histories, and even all beings derive their value?

This supreme Self, immeasurable, is self-luminous, of infinite power, the source of all experience. Knowing that supreme Self, and freed from bondage, the most excellent knower of the Eternal gains the victory.

Things of sense neither wound him nor delight him, he is no longer either allured or revolted by them; in the supreme Self he joys and rejoices ever, delighting in the essence of that unrivalled bliss.

As a child, free from hunger and bodily pain, rejoices in his play, so the sage delights, happy, free from "my" and "I."

His food comes to him freely, without anxiety or sorrow, he drinks from the clear stream, he moves unfettered everywhere, he rests light-hearted in the forest or the burying ground, his vesture needs neither washing nor drying, wide space is his dwelling, the earth is his couch, all roads and pathways are open for his feet, so the sage rejoices in the supreme Eternal. (540)

Dwelling in a body like the air-ships of the gods, he tastes boundless joys freely presented to him, the knower of the supreme Self is as a child obedient to a higher will; he is of form unmanifest, untouched by allurement.

Clothed in space, or wearing a vesture, clothed in skin or in pure thought, as a madman or a child or a ghost, he walks the earth.

Withdrawing desire from things of desire, the silent sage walks in solitude, ever contented in the supreme Self, through the supreme Self he stands firm.

Now as a madman, now a sage, now a glorious, great king, now a humble wanderer, now solitary as a serpent, now honoured, now lightly esteemed, now unknown, thus goes the sage, ever rejoicing in the highest bliss. (544)

Though without riches, yet ever content; though without a helper, yet of mighty power; though bereft, yet ever rejoicing; though afflicted, full of joy.

Acting, though not himself the actor; reaping the reward, though not seeking enjoyment; possessing a body, though beyond the body; though hemmed in, yet going everywhere.

Neither good nor evil, neither fair nor foul touch him, dwelling ever beyond the body, full of the vision of the Eternal.

Pleasure and pain, things fair and foul are for him who is in bondage to the natural or psychic body, falsely attributing selfhood to these; but for the silent seer, one with the supreme Self, whose bonds have fallen away, what fruit is any longer fair or foul?

Because the sun appears to be swallowed by the darkness of eclipse, folk say it is swallowed, misled, not knowing the truth.

So, though the knower of the Eternal be freed from the body and all bonds, those who are deluded see him as possessing a body, because they see the semblance of a body. (550)

As a snake puts off its slough, he stands freed from the body, moving hither and thither before the breath of life.

As the tree is borne by the river to low land or high, the body is borne by destiny to those whose time for bodily experience has come.

Because of the impulses engendered by former works which are being exhausted, he who has gained freedom from the body dwells as though possessing a body, among those who are reaping experience; having attained, he dwells as a witness, silent, like the centre of a wheel moving neither up nor down.

Neither does he engage his powers in objects of perception, nor does he turn away from them, but stands as an onlooker; nor does he desire at all the reward of any act, since his heart is filled with the nectar of the essence of pure bliss.

He who stands firm in the supreme Self, seeking neither the seen nor the unseen, like Divinity, self-revealed, he is the most excellent knower of the Eternal. (555)

Though living, yet ever free, his goal attained, that most excellent knower of the Eternal, when the vesture falls away, being the Eternal, enters the secondless Eternal.

Like a man wearing an actor's costumes of honour or dishonour, so, verily, that excellent knower of the Eternal is ever the Eternal and no other.

Even before the coming of death, the body of the sage who has become one with the Eternal is consumed by the fire of the knowledge of the Eternal, as a withered leaf is consumed.

For the silent sage who stands in the real Self which is the Eternal, through the Self which is formed of perfect, undivided bliss, there is no consideration of fit place or time or circumstance for sloughing off this vesture of skin and flesh and corruption.

To be rid of the body and the ascetic's water pot and staff is not the true deliverance; to be rid of the heart's knot of unwisdom, that is deliverance.

What joy or sorrow is it to the tree, whether its leaf fall in a rivulet or a river, in a favoured field or a sacrificial enclosure?

The destruction of the body, the sense-powers, the life-breath, the mind, is as the destruction of a leaf, a flower, a fruit; but the Self stands firm like the tree, the Self of true Being, formed of bliss.

The sages say that the destruction of the vesture of unwisdom is the revelation of the Real, the true Self, according to the Scripture, "the Self is a realm of pure illumination."

"Imperishable, verily, is the Self," the Scripture declares, concerning the Self, revealing the Self as indestructible among things that perish.

As stone and wood and grass and grain and straw are all burned and reduced to dust, so, verily, the body, the sense-powers, the life-breath, the mind, all that

is manifest, burned up by the fire of wisdom, return to the nature of the higher Self. (565)

As darkness, being of opposite nature, is dissolved in the radiance of the sun, so, verily, all that is manifest melts away in the Eternal.

As the space of ether remains clear space when the earthen jar is destroyed, so, verily, when the vesture is dissolved, the Eternal is the Eternal.

As milk poured into milk, oil into oil, water into water, blends in complete oneness, so, verily, the silent sage who knows the Self becomes one with the Self.

Thus gaining bodiless liberation, pure Being, undivided, the Being of the Eternal, the liberated sage returns no more.

Since the body of unwisdom is burned up by the illumination of oneness with the real Self, and he has become one with the Eternal, how should he again come forth from the Eternal? (570)

Both bondage and liberation from bondage are built up by Glamour, and have no true being in the Self; just as the appearance and disappearance of the fancied serpent have no real existence in the rope, which has remained unchanged.

There is no veiling or enwrapping of the Eternal; since there is naught other than the Eternal, it cannot be veiled. If there were aught else, the single being of the Eternal would be forfeited, but the Scripture admits no duality.

Vainly do the deluded attribute to the Real the bondage and liberation which belong only to the mind; just as the sun is hidden, when the observer is wrapped in cloud. But the Eternal remains secondless, detached Consciousness, one, everlasting.

The belief that the Real comes into being, or ceases to be, belongs to the mind, not to the eternal Reality. (574)

Therefore, these two, bondage and liberation, are built up by Glamour, they are not in the real Self, which is partless, actless, serene, faultless, stainless; what division can there be in the secondless, supreme Being, one like space?

There is neither surcease nor origin, neither bondage nor perfecting, neither seeker for liberation nor liberated; this is the transcendental truth.

Among the crest jewels of all the Scriptures, this is the ultimate mystery. This supreme mystery has been revealed to thee by me to-day; the sin of the Age of Darkness washed away, thy mind set free from desire, I have led thee, seeking liberation, as my own child, to thy goal.

Hearing thus the word of the Master, humbly, and with obedient heart, he went forth, with the Master's blessing, set free from bondage.

The Master also went forth straightway, his mind immersed in the ocean of being and bliss, bringing purity to the whole world.

Thus, through this dialogue of Master and disciple, the revelation of the supreme Self has been made, to awake to joy the souls of those who seek liberation. (580)

From those who reverently accept this benignant teaching, all the sins of the heart are cast out, one by one; they have discarded worldly pleasure, their

hearts have entered peace, self-ruled and seeking liberation, they rejoice in the nectar of the Scripture.

To those who are wandering in the desert of the world, athirst, on the path of circling birth and death, weary, oppressed and worn by sorrow as by the sun's fierce rays, may this teaching reveal the secondless Eternal, bringing joy, like an ocean of nectar near at hand; for this teaching of Shankara brings victory and leads to Nirvana.

C. J.

(The End)

We do not need more Material development, we need more Spiritual development; we do not need more Intellectual power, we need more Moral power; we do not need more Knowledge, we need more Character; we do not need more Government, we need more Culture; we do not need more Law, we need more Religion; we do not need more of the things that are Seen, we need more of the things that are Unseen.

CALVIN COOLIDGE.

EXPERIMENTS IN EDUCATION

WITHIN the last fifty years there has been, among all classes of people, a constantly increasing interest in education. Once the principle of compulsory education for all had been accepted, there rose up a new generation determined to secure the benefits of free education for the mass of the people. One of the chief aims of the new democracy is for its citizens to "get education," and with it the innumerable blessings and benefits which education is supposed to confer. But it is not only in the field of elementary education that there has been a great expansion and development; the spirit of "progress" has influenced every branch of secondary education, and of higher, or University education. A new class of educationalists has come into being, whose sole business it is to study and criticize educational methods, to pull down antiquated systems, and to build up again, with all the delight and enthusiasm of children piling up castles of bricks, and with the same impermanence of construction. The outside observer is bound to admit that the whole of modern education is in a state of flux and change; he often fails to find that bed-rock of common sense which should be the only sure foundation of these changing systems. The theorists spend time in discussing details, but it would seem that they fail to achieve one essential thing,—a clearly-defined ideal towards which all efforts should tend. Indeed it seems difficult to find a common aim or purpose, on which they are all agreed. A class of students at a University were once asked to prepare a comprehensive definition of education; they hurriedly looked up ancient and modern records and prepared an imposing list of some fifty definitions, taken from many sources. It did not occur to many in that class to prepare a definition of their own; few cared to think the matter out to its conclusion, for if Aristotle's definition of education did not satisfy them, nor any of the other forty-nine definitions, they could always accept that of the professor—which, indeed, was the most profitable course to follow. What, then, is meant by education? The word *e-ducare* means, literally, to "draw out," to develop; most educators will agree that some form of development is implied in education. But what is it that they want to develop in the child? That is the critical question that every educator must face. Some consider that the physical growth and well-being of the child is the essential; others, aiming higher, value intellectual training and achievement; others think that moral character is the gravest consideration; a few define certain spiritual values as the ideal of all their efforts. In general, they all agree that education must prepare the child for life, but opinions vary widely as to what are the important things in life for which he must be fitted. Because of that variety of opinion, there have grown up many and varying systems of education, which have been a matter of experiment throughout the ages. Interest in education is as old as mankind; it is an outer expression of that

inner cry, uttered by every thinker who has been willing to look life in the face: "What must I do to be saved?"

It is interesting to consider different systems of education that have influenced Western thought, and to enquire how far they have been successful, on their own lines. It is usual to look to Greece for the dawn of civilization in the West; historians forget that the Greek genius was of gradual development. It did not spring, like Athene, fully armed from the head of Zeus, but evolved from far older systems of thought, going back to remote antiquity; for the sources of Western thought can be traced back to Egypt, to India, to the land of the Chaldees. It is true, none the less, that there is a direct and intimate connection between European civilization and Greek thought.

The student of Greek education finds two contrasting and clearly-defined systems: that of the Spartans and that of the Athenians. Spartan discipline has become proverbial, and indeed it produced a race of soldiers that, for hardness and endurance, has rarely been surpassed. The more versatile Athenian despised such a narrowing of life and thought; he considered that education should be an all-round development, and should make for general excellence,—ἀρετή. Physical and intellectual development must proceed simultaneously, and the Greek boy went to school, quite young, to learn music and gymnastics,—"music" including the study of Homer and the memorizing of hymns to the gods. The aim of such training was to produce balance and harmony. Later, other subjects were added to his study, but there was always a great deal of time spent on physical exercise, resulting in a race that, for its physical exce lence, has been the admiration and envy of later ages. As the boys grew to maturity, it was considered that their further education could best be provided through association with the older men who frequented the gymnasium. The Athenians had a great admiration for brilliant speaking and forensic display, and there arose a demand for trained speakers and orators to sway the law-courts and political meetings. A new class of teachers thus acquired fame in Greece, for they went about teaching the science of oratory, and exacted in return high fees. These teachers came to be known as Sophists; they included experts in all branches of science and learning, and contributed much to the subject-matter of education. It is probable that some of them were unprincipled, and were more intent on showing skill in argument than in seeking truth. Socrates saw the danger of such a system; his merciless logic pierced the shallow pretence of these "wise men"; by his clever dialectic he proved that the wisest of them knew, in fact, very little. Of course he incurred the odium of teachers and pupils, yet he attracted around him a band of promising men, some of whom were genuinely desirous for truth. He never sought to enforce his own opinions, but rather to train men, who were willing to undergo his severe cross-questioning, to think for themselves and to seek truth above all things. Knowledge, he held, came largely through recollection, and afterwards through a process of intuition; the knowledge of self was the highest branch of learning. He would not call himself a teacher; his function was rather, he declared, to bring souls to birth. In

that he was the forerunner of that other great apostle of the Greeks who, some five hundred years later, was to reveal to them a new and living Truth,—St. Paul, who laboured, as he testified, "until Christ be formed in you." Socrates, like other great Teachers, was attacked by those who preferred darkness rather than the light; in defence of his principles, he faced death with high hope and unflinching courage. It was left to his pupil, Plato, to carry on and extend his work, in the school of philosophy which has influenced centuries of thought. Plato revealed to men a new ideal of Beauty, Goodness, Truth, and developed a rigorous system of intellectual training in the pursuit of Truth. The schools of philosophy that arose later contributed to the search for Truth, or, failing that, wandered in the mists of idle speculation; but, at the outset, these schools set before the Greeks a new and a higher ideal of education.

Rome came with her triumphant armies, to conquer the Greeks, and to be in turn conquered and ensnared by the brilliance of their intellect. It is generally considered that the Roman influence in Europe is most clearly discerned in matters of law and government, in their institutions and organization. On the side of education they made an important contribution; they insisted on the binding power of parental authority. Education of boys was, to a great extent, developed in the home, by both father and mother; it tended to train children to understand the meaning of duty and to respond to that call. The Roman martial discipline was akin to the Spartan system, and developed a fine type of courage and manliness. It was only when discipline relaxed, and luxury took its place, and mob-rule prevailed, that the name of Rome ceased to hold the world in its sway.

With the advent of Christianity came an entirely new ideal that found its inspiration in the law of love. It was a new conception of Truth, revealed in the person of the Founder, who came to bear witness to the Truth. Thereafter, when the Church became organized, and extended her influence, she gained a large measure of control in the matter of education. It is certain that the monastic Orders did much to save civilization in Europe from being overwhelmed in the midst of barbarian invasions, by keeping alive the torch of learning and the light of Truth. When times grew more peaceful, they were able to found schools and to teach children. Charlemagne realized the importance of such foundations, and called Alcuin from England to help him in the organization of schools in his empire. Christian education, in its highest ideal, sought to train children in the knowledge of God and in the service of Christ. There were two main ideals of service: that of the monk, who renounced the world, for a greater good; that of the knight, who sought to champion the cause of Truth and Justice in the world. The opportunity for the world was then magnificent; in the eleventh and twelfth centuries there was the possibility of combining the wisdom of the Greeks and the learning of the Arabs with the highest ideals of Christianity. It was, perhaps, intended that these converging streams of thought should meet and be fused into a wider conception of Truth, of Goodness, of Beauty; but the attempt which was made then did not come to fruition; perhaps the mediæval education had not prepared the minds

and souls of men to receive Truth in anything but a limited form. It has been left to a later century to reincarnate on earth that ideal of the Divine Wisdom.

At the time of the Renaissance, enthusiasm for classical learning revived, and inspired art and literature, but the inspiration failed to find its highest expression, and degenerated into admiration for mere physical beauty and intellectual brilliance. There came a new idea of the importance of the individual, an idea that finds its counterpart in modern education and in the present ideals of democracy. From the time of the Renaissance, new schools of education have grown up, with many varying systems; few of them have achieved the high ideal set by chivalry, the fine standards taught by the Religious Orders of the Middle Ages. In the conflict of religious strife and bitterness, there arose a new Order that was determined to fight the world with its own methods; the Jesuits realized the immense influence of education and learning, and set to work to found schools that should prepare men for that conflict, in the world. The Jesuit system of education has become famous; it remains, at its best, a fine ideal of training and discipline, for it recognizes the greater glory of God as the sole aim of life, and the chief object of education, insisting that education must include the highest possible development of intellect and of will.

In the education of the present day there is a type of school that is interesting because of the men it has produced, and that is the English public school for boys—schools such as Eton, Harrow, Charterhouse and others. Sometimes the system is criticized because it makes too much of athletic prowess and the social qualities, and too little of intellectual attainment; but it is certain that the great English public schools have produced men who have contributed their part to founding and holding the British Empire overseas,—and that is no mean achievement. A schoolmaster in one of those schools was once discussing their educational standards, and he placed the standard of values of his school as follows:—(1) Make everything contribute to the building of moral character; (2) Encourage scholarship by every possible means; (3) Let the games take care of themselves. It is, perhaps, unusual to find the games last in value, but that school has justified its existence in a remarkable degree, and it is beginning to be influential throughout the country.

Every nation in Europe has a different standard and system of education from that of its neighbour. In America, during the early part of the last century, the fine ideals and strict discipline maintained in the schools, contributed much to produce a splendid type of men. Now that ideals, in general, have degenerated throughout the country and have tended to be levelled down into a supreme desire for commercial advancement, the schools and education have suffered accordingly. There is still much talk of ideals, but the general trend of education is to equip men and women to meet the struggle for existence, and to emerge victorious, and materially prosperous. The value of each subject taught is being questioned; its sole merit is considered to be its immediate commercial or utilitarian interest. Judged by that standard, the study of the classics, of ancient history and philosophy, the mental training gained

in the study of higher mathematics, is each in turn weighed in the balance and set aside as worthless, in the face of modern demands. The new standards, suggest "citizenship," "the right use of leisure," and other vague definitions as the new and right ideals of education. In most of the schools controlled by democratic governments, the aim is to teach the children the rudiments of learning, but the higher side of education, the training of character, the teaching of the knowledge of God, is utterly neglected; in some countries it is even forbidden by law. The child, it is said, must find in himself his own standards and ideals; the result is the encouragement of an aggressive individualism, which bodes ill for the rising generation, for they are the first to suffer bitterly from such a system. They suffer in an enfeebled, restless, nervous physique; in their untrained, undisciplined intellect; in their uncontrolled, unstable emotional nature; in the fact that their spiritual growth has been dwarfed and stunted. They cry out against the educators, with that terrible inarticulate cry of children who have asked for bread and have been given a stone. The blame rests with those who will not recognize that no education is worthy of the name, unless it has as its foundation a firm and enlightened discipline. There can be no learning without discipline, no happiness in life without self-control. Students of a higher Wisdom recognize the intimate connection, in word and in fact, between "discipline" and "discipleship." Of that Wisdom, it is written, "she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God, being commended for the gift of discipline." Those friends of God are willing to take on a share of the ignorance and darkness and misery of striving humanity, that thereby they may be enabled to guide souls towards the Light. They look to the example of one who himself "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . the chastisement of our peace (*disciplina pacis*) was upon him."

There is, in our days, a new school of psychology which is gravely concerned with the problem of how children learn anything. Psychology, indeed, is a misnomer, for its exponents take no account of spiritual values and scarcely admit that the child has a soul; they are concerned with all kinds of mechanical and artificial devices for measuring brain-knowledge, for discovering how the child begins to acquire knowledge. Sometimes these modern psychologists come across truths that are profoundly significant, but because they have no higher principles, no true standard to judge the "things of the spirit," these truths become distorted into mere absurdities, or idle speculations, to ensnare the minds of men.

What then is the remedy for all this confusion? It would seem that, in the first place, it is necessary to arrive at a definition of education that extends beyond the acquisition of mere brain-knowledge, and reaches down to the fundamental things of life. "Why did God make you?" asks a Christian catechism, and the answer is given in no uncertain terms: "To know God, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world." In another version, the duty to God is more fully explained: "To love Him with all my heart and with all my mind and with all my soul and with all my strength." If that definition were

more generally accepted, it would form an excellent basis for every educational system. Education, to be complete, must be on the lines of an all-round development,—physical, moral, intellectual, spiritual, that the child may be taught to utilize, to the full, every God-given power and faculty, in the service of the Highest. To neglect any of these aspects is to court failure; "a sound mind in a sound body" may be a fine achievement, but it is of little value unless the child has been taught to prize Truth above all things, and to seek first 'the kingdom of God and His righteousness." That is where the function of the teacher is found to require a high degree of training and vocation. In the East this is understood, where teachers are held in reverence, and where there is some knowledge of the binding power of the Guru-parampara chain. In the West there is, unfortunately, no such understanding, and it is left to individual teachers to discover their own responsibility, and the greatness of their opportunity in the teaching of children. The realization brings with it a sense of their own limitations, and the need, on their part, to undergo severe training in the school of Wisdom; for they can only teach Truth in so far as they have themselves experienced it, at first-hand. It is written of the Master Christ, that he began "to do and to teach," and the order of the words shows the significance of the doing, as preceding the teaching of others. Those who would follow in the Way he pointed out, can find no better training for teaching others, than in studying his teaching and his method, so vividly described in the Gospel narrative. It is a method that can be found in the books of Wisdom of all times, and in the example of all great Teachers. In *them* is the source of inspiration, and work done unreservedly for them cannot fail to bear fruit, perhaps in far-off ages to come. For the teacher, who realizes his vocation, works not for the present but for Eternity, and there is in his own heart an eternal Hope: "Thine eyes shall behold thy Teacher, and the land of far distances."

S. C.

Educate, or govern, they are one and the same word. Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know. It means teaching them to behave as they do not behave. And the true "compulsory education" which the people now ask of you is not catechism, but drill. It is not teaching the youth of England the shapes of letters and the tricks of numbers; and then leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery, and their literature to lust. It is, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. It is a painful, continual, and difficult work; to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise,—but above all—by example.—RUSKIN.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP

THE worship of departed parents and forbears was no doubt the earliest of the deflections from, or misunderstandings of, the teachings of the Adept Kings who were sent to show the Third Race man the way in which he should walk. The worship of the dead is as old as the worship of a Supreme Being, so far at least as we can learn from history and tradition, and we find it existent among some of the lowest of savage tribes, who have forgotten their gods, but are ever mindful of the dead who once dwelt amongst them. Not only savages but many of the most civilized nations of their time have honoured their dead by prayer and sacrifice, inspired thereto by either love or fear, or simply by the desire of gaining possessions and ensuring success in material undertakings, or to obtain recovery from illness.

The existence of this form of worship is noted in all parts of the world where travellers have penetrated. Captain Cook found it in the islands of the Pacific, and it is described as practised by the aborigines of Siberia: in Mysore and Annam, in darkest Africa and among the dwellers in Amazonian forests. In ancient times it was sometimes associated with terrible cruelties to the living, the wives and the slaves of the dead ruler being slain at his sepulture, so that they might still tend and serve him as in life. But in the family it was most often the simple continuation of the love and reverence of the children, for him who had nurtured them and protected them from harm. The Greeks and Romans, as well as the early Hindus, paid reverence to their ancestors, and offered them sacrifices of animals, fruits, milk, and wine, lest they should perish of hunger, or should be angered and visit their wrath upon their neglectful sons. The need of paying reverence to the dead was so compelling that among many nations a childless couple invariably adopted a son, to inherit their property and ensure their own sustenance in the life beyond.

There are vestiges of ancestor worship even to-day in Christian lands. The funeral baked meats of our fathers were perhaps a survival of the offerings originally made to the departed, and the copious libations of the "wake" were in earlier times poured out to the dead. In the two greatest branches of the Christian Church not only are the canonized saints invoked, but many an earnest prayer is sent up to the beloved dead, who, the survivors believe, have passed through the purgatorial fires and, while enjoying the beatific vision, are yet mindful of those left behind; and all the souls of the faithful departed are commemorated on the second of November, though now, on that day, the prayers of the living are offered for them rather than to them.

The two countries where ancestor worship has existed for thousands of years, and is still practised in public ceremonial and private devotion, are China and Japan.

Confucianism, the origin of which goes back beyond even the ancient records

of China, is still the ruling spiritual force of its millions of people. Though now called after his name, in reality it dates back, probably thousands of years before Confucius lived. In the twelfth century before Christ, seven hundred years before Confucius, the rites and ceremonies of the ancient religion were codified by Duke Cheu of the Imperial family. He made no innovations—but simply put in permanent form, for the use of future generations, the rites and ceremonies attending the worship of the dead, from which there could be no slightest deviation in word or gesture, at least in public worship.

No more than Cheu, was Confucius an innovator. He took no credit to himself for being anything more than a commentator. "I comment upon, I elucidate the ancient works. I compose no new ones," he said. He preached the doctrine of duty—duty of son to father, of wife to husband, of citizen to the magistrate, of all to the Emperor. The extension of this was the duty of the living to the dead—unless the duty to the living was a downgrowth of the primitive practice of duty to those who had gone before.

It has been suggested that Ancestor worship is a memory of the worship once paid to our celestial progenitors and to the Ray of which our souls are a part; that it is the promise of a recognition which men to-day have lost, but which they will recover when the Son once more reveals the Father in the hierarchy of divine life.

The essential fact in Ancestor Worship, says Hovelaque in *La Chine*, is the belief in the survival of the shade after death. To nourish, pacify and conciliate this shade, one must render him a worship as immortal as he is himself. Should this worship fail, the famished and irritated shade becomes an evil power, to be feared by all, but especially by his impious descendants, if any still exist. Each one, therefore, has the duty, which coincides in all respects with his interest, to render this worship and to perpetuate it, that his wraith in turn may receive it and be not condemned to wander miserably through all eternity. All the generations of a given family are thus one, and equally interested in the eternal maintenance of this worship. The unit is not the perishable and passing individual, but the immortal and enduring family. The individual by himself exists not, nor has he rights, only duties; he is but a link in a chain stretching to infinity, back in the past and onward in the future.

In China, however, as among all other peoples, the motive which prompts religious observance necessarily varies as men vary in development. The educated Chinaman would repudiate Hovelaque's idea that his beloved ancestor could become an "evil power," even though neglected. The ancestor would not feel that neglect as something affecting himself, but, instead, as something dishonouring to the living, and thus to the whole family, living and dead. The Chinaman of one class may honour his ancestors solely from fear, somewhat as a Christian may perform his "religious duties" in order to curry favour with God and to escape Hell; but the Chinaman of another class may honour his ancestors from a passionate sense of gratitude, from pure and unselfish love, and with the most intense feeling of reverence and worship. It is

not easy for Western writers to recognize these distinctions, their tendency being always to judge a religion by its lower levels of motive and practice. Yet, just as we might say that we owe it to ourselves to be honest, regardless of results, so a Chinaman might say that he owes it to his family to show honour to his ancestors. Self-respect and good manners would make any other course impossible.

Of the three forms of religion dominant in Japan to-day, Shintoism is pre-eminent, not by reason of the number of its avowed followers—though it may be affirmed that every Japanese is subconsciously a Shintoist—but because it is the national, the official religion, and not only that, but the expression of the innate, instinctive heart of every son of Nippon. He may be avowedly a Buddhist, a Confucianist, or, as so many now are, a "rationalist"; but if he is a patriot, if he has the love of country in his heart, he is *ipso facto*, willy nilly, a Shintoist.

Then what is Shintoism that one can be a follower of it, consciously or unconsciously, and whatever his religious belief or lack of it? It can hardly be called a creed, for it has none; at least it imposes none upon its followers, though there are certain views of creation and of the constitution and principles of man and nature which are taught by its priests and accepted by its more educated members, but are of obligation upon no one.

The earliest scripture of Shintoism, the Kojiki, dates back to the year 711 A.D., when the Empress Gemmyo gave orders for the compilation of a history of Japan. But just as the Pentateuch is both a history of the Jewish people and a cosmogony, so the first history of the Japanese people is a collection of the myths and symbolic legends of the creation of the world and of the foundation of Japan. In the beginning were five gods, the first immobile, undefinable, taking no part in creation—in short the Absolute. The second and third were the agents in creation, but going only so far as to produce chaos. The office of the fourth and fifth primeval gods is not explicitly defined. From these five emanated a septenary, three single and four dual divinities, of whom the last couple, Izanagi and Izanami, apparently the first of the divinities to have material form, were the active agents in creation. They created, or rather procreated the islands constituting the land of Japan, and gave birth to innumerable "kami" or devas who not only ensoul but actually are rocks and trees and soil, the mountains, rivers, and valleys, the sunshine, the light of the moon and stars, the winds and the rain, the dews and frosts, the clouds and earthquakes, and everything that is. Finally, Izanami died in giving birth to the god of fire, Hinohaya-yagiwono-kami. Izanagi was inconsolable and descended into hell to deliver his consort, but failed, and, on returning to earth, instituted the rite of purification to cleanse himself and his garments. From every part of him, thus purified, sprang a new kami or divinity—from his left eye the sun-goddess Amaterasu, from his right, Tsukiyomi the moon-god, and from his nose, Susanoo, the lord of the earth.

None of these creative deities appears to be worshiped, save Amaterasu, whose grandson, Ninigino-mikoto, was the first divine emperor of Japan, and

his grandson, Jimmu, the first earth-born emperor. Thus is shown the divine origin of the Mikado, a descendant in the direct line of the goddess Amaterasu, therefore himself divine and an object of adoration; and thus is explained the national or official character of Shintoism. Furthermore, as every object in nature is born of the gods, is a "kami," it is worthy of veneration. As Hovelaque says, "In Japan, worship of the ancestors is confused with that of the forces of nature. For the Japanese, the ancestral gods and their descendants, and the Japanese land, are one. The substance of the earth is that of the gods. And so every Japanese soul comes from the divine earth, after death dwells in it and animates a part of it—mountain, rock, plain, tree, gravel, river, lake—and is identified with them." The local gods and the domestic gods, the Emperor and the soil of Japan, are all one in the divinity. Pantheism can go no further. But, as Nitobe says, "The tenets of Shintoism cover the two predominating features of the emotional life of our race—Patriotism and Loyalty. . . . Its nature worship endeared the country to our inmost souls, while its Ancestor worship, tracing from lineage to lineage, made the Imperial family the fountain-head of the whole nation. To us the country is more than land and soil from which to mine gold or to reap grain—it is the sacred abode of the gods, the spirits of our forefathers."

Shintoism, says Lowell, is the Japanese conception of the cosmos. "It is a combination of the worship of nature and of their own ancestors, but the character of the combination is ethnologically instructive. Both are aboriginal instincts. Next to the fear of natural phenomena in point of primitiveness, comes the fear of one's father, as children and savages show. But races, like individuals, tend to differentiate the two as they develop." The Japanese did not. "Filial respect lasted, and by virtue of not becoming less became more, till it filled not only the whole sphere of morals, but expanded into the sphere of cosmogony. To the Japanese eye, the universe itself took on the paternal look. Awe of their parents, which these people could comprehend, lent explanation to dread of nature, which they could not."

Shinto in its outward form is as devoid of any appeal to the sensuous as is Quakerism. Its temples are nothing but bare-walled meeting houses, and the sole object of note in the sanctuary is a mirror. "This," says Nitobe, "typifies the human heart, which, when perfectly placid and clear, reflects the very image of the Deity. When you stand, therefore, in front of the shrine to worship, you see your own image reflected on its shining surface, and the act of worship is tantamount to the old Delphic injunction, 'Know Thyself.' But self-knowledge does not imply, either in the Greek or Japanese teaching, knowledge of the physical part of man, not his anatomy or his psycho-physics; knowledge was to be of a moral kind, the introspection of our moral nature."

Besides this mirror, which is said to be a borrowing from Buddhism, there are in the shrine, but hidden from view, copies of the mirror, sword, and jewel which Amaterasu gave to her grandson when he ascended the throne of Japan as its first Mikado.

The Shinto code of morals is as simple as its shrines, or even more so, for it

scarcely exists. It may indeed be summed up in the single phrase, "Follow the inspiration of your heart and obey the emperor." Every man is assumed to be innately inclined to virtue and obedient to the dictates of his conscience. If he does wrong, the law will take him in hand, but Shinto has no remedy; it believes in existence beyond the grave, but proclaims no absolute system of reward or punishment, and karma and reincarnation are unknown in its theology. For the Shintoist, death is not annihilation nor even prolonged sleep—it is merely going from one room to another in the same house. A dead Japanese is still a Japanese; the nation comprises those who have disappeared from view as well as those in the visible world—there is but one eternal family, and the duties of the living to the dead differ in essence not at all from the duties of the child to the parent. There is no individual existence, for all are but links in one great chain.

The teachings of Shinto regarding the nature of man and all things else, material and immaterial, suggest an influx of the ancient wisdom; but whether they have been borrowed from some other religion, or are echoes of the universal wisdom religion taught their disciples by the Adepts on the shores of Mansarovara Lake, are questions which the present writer cannot answer. Percival Lowell gives the barest outline of a portion of esoteric teaching which was imparted to him by the head of a Shinto sect:—

In the cosmos (or is it Kosmos?) there are three principles—*gotai*, body; *shinki*, consciousness or spirit; and *tamashii*, soul. Minerals, vegetables and animals have but two principles—body and spirit; but most men have all three, though some are without soul. *Tamashii*, soul, is of like substance with *shinki*, spirit or mind, but is devoid of its attributes. Mind and soul co-exist in the body but as, with the practice of virtue, and use of the will, no doubt, mind becomes clarified or loses its attributes, it gradually approaches and finally becomes one with soul. What happens then is apparently left to conjecture, or perhaps there is no curiosity regarding it—indeed the majority of lay Shintoists know little of the science of their religion and are content with the belief that they will live for ever.

Though simple in faith as in habitation, Shintoism is rich in ritual, liturgies being prescribed to meet all occasions—prayers for a good harvest, for safe conduct during a journey, for protection from robbers, the dedication of shrines, prayers and offerings to ancestors, purification after contamination by material or psychic evil, marriage, burial, dedication of the infant to a patron kami, etc.

There has been much speculation as to the origin of Shintoism, and some refuse to regard it as autochthonous, the Japanese being such adepts at adoption and adaptation. It can scarcely be questioned, however that it is truly Japanese, as truly, that is, as Brahmanism is Indian. Neither was born on the soil of its present home, but both were brought in with the present owners of the land. As Mme. Blavatsky tells us, there was a time, when the great Gobi desert was a sea, when an unbroken continent stretched from the present India and Ceylon to Java and far-away Tasmania on the south, and to

Tibet, Mongolia, and Great Tartary on the north. All this was called India by the ancient nations of the west. "When we say therefore that India has civilized the world and was the alma-mater of the civilizations, arts, and sciences of all other nations, . . . we mean archaic, prehistoric India." The Japanese are believed to be a mixture of the aboriginal Ainos and two conquering races—one Malaysian from the south and the other Tartar from the west. These invaders doubtless brought their religion with them—the pre-Vedic tradition which produced Brahmanism in India, Confucianism in China, and Shintoism in Japan. The points of resemblance between these three national beliefs are striking,—dissimilar enough to discredit the borrowing of one from the other, but indicating the branching off from a common centre. To quote again from Mme. Blavatsky, "When we remember that the Vedas came—agreeably to all tradition—from the Mansarovara Lake in Tibet and the Brahmans themselves from the far north, we are justified in looking on the esoteric doctrines of every people who once had and still have them, as having proceeded from one and the same source, and to thus call it the Aryan-Chaldæo-Tibetan doctrine, or Universal Wisdom Religion."

From the brief account above given of the essence of Shintoism, it is evident that it came originally from the same source as Brahmanism—making allowance for the discrepancies which must creep in during the gradual corruption of doctrine, as the memory of the original teaching of the Adepts slowly fades and superstition transforms its features.

It is said in support of the foreign origin of Shinto that its very name is Chinese. But that is due to the fact that the Japanese learned to write from the Chinese, and in using the Chinese ideographs sometimes retained their original sounds. Until the introduction of Buddhism into Japan in the sixth century, Shinto being the only religion in the country it had no need of a name. But when Buddhism and Confucianism came, some appellation was needed to distinguish it from its rivals. So it was called Kami-no-michi, the Way of the Gods, but when it came to be written in Chinese characters it was phrased in Chinese words and called Shin-to, the Way of Heaven.

T. L. S.

The measure to which we should love God is to love Him without measure. Greatly misled is that creature who puts the love of his heart elsewhere than in Him.—Saint Louis, King of France.

THE FIRST OBJECT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THE writer had been a member of the Society for a number of years without having any very definite idea of just what the first and principal object of the Society was about. He had a general feeling of some vague platitude involved, and subscribed to it more because he thought he glimpsed an underlying spiritual ideal, than because he felt any active outward sympathy or desire to work for the attainment of the object. In the last ten years the gradual breakdown of common sense, and the consequent increase of modern democratic "sloppy idealism," has brought the word Brotherhood into ever greater prominence, and the more he read about it, the less "use" he had for it. He was quite certain that he was not everybody's brother, and would have regarded any sudden increase in this type of relationship with extreme alarm. Perusal of the QUARTERLY made it apparent that certain members were beginning to feel that the world in general was coming around to their misconception of the point of view of The Theosophical Society, but the opposite feeling in our ranks was fortunately powerful and dominant, and entirely capable of stating its case clearly. About a year ago the writer decided that it was high time for him to crystallize his point of view about Universal Brotherhood and to find out what the Society meant by it. The present article is the outcome of the reflection and reading thus undertaken, and is devoid of any authority, save such conferred upon it by whatever common sense the reader may discover in the course of its perusal.

I. WHAT IS UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD?

The dictionary defines brotherhood in its extended sense as an association, the members of which resemble each other in appearance, manners, or employment, or who are engaged in the same purpose or combination. It is obvious, therefore, that the correct use of the term involves a necessary unit or standard of special likeness. This raises almost infinite possibilities. In the whole universe anything you please is certain to resemble everything else in some way or another. The poets have sung of our kinship with the stars, while man and the sun are alike, in that carbon is an integral part of their respective compositions. Resemblances can outnumber the observable differences, or vice versa; and relationships are declared to be natural or artificial in consequence.

If we turn now to human brotherhoods, here too there are an almost infinite number of respects in which men can be found to be alike. They are alike in having similar organs, passions, capabilities, etc. There can be a brotherhood of thieves and a brotherhood of friars. In every case, however, where we speak of likenesses between several men or aggregations of men, any intelligent person can also think of differences.

The use of the term Universal Brotherhood would seem to imply the idea that there are one or more respects in which all human beings are alike, in spite of whatever differences may exist between individuals or groups of individuals. Here again the likeness may be natural or artificial. Thus the fact that all men have lungs, and five fingers on each hand, can scarcely be said to establish Universal Brotherhood; for this concept, when dignified with capital letters, has always been a philosophical ideal of humanity, which in moments of reflection revolts at strife, discord, rivalry, and their attendant ills. Consequently it requires an adequate philosophical endorsement to render it tenable.

The modern conception of the brotherhood of man, in my view, lacks entirely any such adequate philosophical endorsement. The Great War undoubtedly accentuated the evils of strife, discord, and rivalry in the mind of the present generation, which proclaims Universal Brotherhood as the principle which renders these evils unpardonable, and the future occurrence of war unnecessary. It is alleged that it is a disgrace for men to fight, when they are "all human beings and brothers together." This is really saying nothing more than that all men are men. For that matter, all horses are horses, and all mud is mud. These facts are very true, but there is nothing especially soul-thrilling in them, and they contain no endorsement whatever of an ideal.

Apart, however, from the entire absence of an adequate philosophical endorsement, the point of view of the modern generation about brotherhood, contains several fallacies. In the first place, the distinction between a fact and an ideal has been altogether overlooked, a theme to which I shall return later. What a fatuous hope that the pronouncement of an ideal will ever cure the evil perceived! The confusion of ideal with fact leads, secondly, to the virtual prostitution of the ideal. The formulation of an ideal never cures an evil; the ideal must be *attained*. Now the attainment of an ideal requires effort, and the more worth while it is, the more effort there must be. It is precisely this effort which people try to evade at every turn. If strife, discord and rivalry are evils, they can be overcome by effort only, and not by waving an ideal in the faces of erring humanity. Fortunately for progress, even a right belief, if held for insufficient or wrong reasons, and used for wrong ends, leads into a blind alley. We are no nearer Universal Brotherhood than before. It will dawn upon people in time that ideals cannot be legislated into existence, and that Hague Tribunals and Leagues of Nations can never be substitutes for character, nor bring peace on earth and good will to men.

Though the mere formulation of an ideal is rarely a sufficient incentive to effort, adequate philosophical endorsement of the ideal will at least influence a certain proportion of people. It seems to me that the ideal of the Universal Brotherhood of man rests fundamentally on the fact that, in a spiritual universe, he and his fellows are souls, undergoing the experiences of life to render them self-conscious masters of a destiny which transcends the loftiest flights of the imagination. Whether they know it or not, like it or not, they have this great bond in common, and all are engaged in the same adventure, backward and sullen, or eager and striving. I am aware that this "fact" is not

capable of scientific proof or demonstration, and that it is a statement of religious belief. This belief, however, can be endorsed by three important considerations. First, it is significant that it has been the instinctive faith of all advanced peoples and all great religions. Secondly, all those who have lived their lives on this basis have left us unanimous testimony of its efficacy. Thirdly, all those who have preferred an agnostic position have either been notoriously absorbed in one narrow line of interest to the exclusion of the major human problems, or they have signally failed to evolve a system which rendered their happiness superior to the accidents of fate or circumstance.

II. Universal Brotherhood and Theosophy

As I understand it, this is one way of stating the theosophical view of Universal Brotherhood. If it is to mean anything at all, it should rest upon as high a philosophical, ethical, and religious basis, as is possible or reasonable. Belief in Universal Brotherhood, then, amounts to believing that in a spiritual universe Man is essentially a soul undergoing a course of spiritual development. If a man believe this, and if he be willing to try to live his life on this basis, he can conscientiously join The Theosophical Society.

But this is not all. The first object of the Society is "to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood." A nucleus is defined as a central mass or point, about which matter is gathered, or around which accretions can be made, both literally and figuratively. From this several things follow. There would be no point, for instance, in the existence of the Society, if Universal Brotherhood were a fact rather than an ideal to be attained. It would be a foolish waste of energy to found a society with the object of forming a nucleus of something which already existed. It certainly seems a fair deduction that such was the point of view, at least of the founders and sponsors of the Society. That the charge of cynicism cannot be laid to their door is proved by the conduct of men themselves, than which nothing could be more antithetical to the proper relationship between spiritual brothers. It is true that strife, discord and rivalry are evils, not, however, because all men are brothers, but because of faults of character which render the attainment of the ideal of brotherhood impossible, as long as they persist. The cure is not to believe that all men are brothers, but to eliminate the faults of character. To sum up, then: Universal Brotherhood is not a fact, all men are not brothers here and now, and a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood could only be said to exist, if a body of T. S. members, or like-minded people, were living up to the moral obligations of the ideal of Universal Brotherhood. I would suggest that readers examine in this connection the official Report of the thirteenth Convention of the Society, held in India in 1888, and published in the *Theosophist* as a special supplement to the issue of January, 1889. It will be found that the views expressed above are given official sanction there by the then officers of the Society, and have never since been revoked. The writer can only add that, for his part, if the ideal of Universal Brotherhood were a more superficial one, and were the deductions given above not valid, he would have no interest in being a member of the Society.

Something has been said about obligations. Leaving the discussion of Universal Brotherhood as an ideal, and coming down to the present moment, what are we to do about it, and on what basis shall we treat our fellowmen? We have seen that a fact may be spiritually true without being objectively true. It can be no part of the obligations of a Theosophist, therefore, to pretend that Universal Brotherhood is an objective fact, to live as if it were, or to treat people as if they were his spiritual brothers, striving to develop their souls, when nothing could be further from the intent of most of them. He would merely be making himself ridiculous; he would certainly be a bore, and would in all probability add to the superfluous stock of ill-will which has already accumulated.

There is one corollary here which may be worth a moment's profitable examination. One of the true purposes of religion is to provide a system of action or a rationale of life, which, if consistently followed, will lead to the attainment of the ideals postulated, whether philosophically, by act of faith, or by intuition. The success of the individual will be the best test of the validity of his religion; but note that the possession of spiritual ideals and a working religion to which intellectual assent has been given, does not and cannot release the individual from effort. It does just the reverse; it increases his responsibility if the effort be not forthcoming. Here too the modern tendency is to use religion as a means of escaping that dreaded bogy, effort. On all sides we see the pathetic spectacle of people scrambling around for some kind of religion. In an age of boasted efficiency, we are looking for short cuts to Heaven. Varied and extraordinary indeed are some of the proposed expedients. Some shake or spin themselves around into catalepsy, others believe in purple lights and esthetic dancing; some consult the spirits or entrust their fate to the caprice of the ouija board. A crowd of Yogis, Swamis, etc., all have their followers, and are able to earn a fair competence. This reminds us strongly of the Romans of the late Empire who, weary of their own gods, had crazes for those of the peoples they conquered. It is one of the well known signs of decadence.

In this respect Theosophy does not offer the slightest exception to the general rule, and joining the Society may well be a sign of decadence on the part of the individual member. What difference does it make if he exchange a belief in the Infallibility of the Pope for Reincarnation, or swap Invincible Ignorance for Karma? If he does nothing about it, he will be no nearer Heaven, he will have made no spiritual advance, his dues will have been paid in vain. If, indeed, his new set of beliefs are sounder than the old, or if he has some beliefs where formerly he had none, his second state is worse than the first. A belief in Universal Brotherhood, then, had best not be lightly subscribed to as a matter of sentiment, unless the proposed new member is prepared to make manifest his belief in action.

III. Distinctions of Race, Creed, and Colour

The foregoing discussion leads naturally to a consideration of the final words of the first object of The Theosophical Society, "without distinction of race,

creed or colour," as this raises the question of what constitutes true tolerance, and what intolerance. These distinctions are obvious facts, and somewhat baffle the thought of the day, with its superficial, rather than spiritual, explanation of brotherhood. The modern tendency is to ignore these distinctions. The argument is that if all men are brothers, these distinctions cannot really matter. The confusion which results when this type of illusion is put into practice, is excellently exemplified in parts of Latin America, where half-breeds and mongrels of various races, with a scattering of pure savages, combine in an *opéra bouffe* of a republic, or where Italians in Fiume are expected to be enthusiastic Jugo-Slavs. Such confusion is often the only cure of the illusion, and leads in time to a clearer perception of the spiritual truth, just as a sufficient number of fits will finally cure the dog of eating rotten bones.

There are, indeed, distinctions of race, creed, and colour, of morals, manners, and tastes; and they are natural and unavoidable. The result is an instinctive tendency to select or to reject, and men prefer those of their kind who are like them in some respects, and avoid those who are unlike. To the modern ear, selection and rejection have a harsh sound and an "unbrotherly" connotation. But just as the word "alike" implies the existence of unlikeness somewhere, so "selection" implies rejection to distinguish it from pure eclecticism, neutrality, or passive acquiescence in the sense of undifferentiated, inorganic receptivity. As long as differences exist, therefore, things alike will be selected, and the unlike will be rejected, and this is as true of human beings as of chemical elements. This principle, for it is a principle of nature, operating on the infinite variety of differences in living creatures, is what actuates evolution on a universal scale. If the best were not selected and the unfit rejected, if species did not have a closer affinity with similar individuals than with other groups, if all were not equally exposed to the acid test of ever-varying and changing environment, how would any progress have been made? And while the objector may charge the Divine Power back of evolutionary progress with cruelty, heartlessness, and "unbrotherliness," he cannot prove it, and even if it were true, what could he do about it? He had better accept the universe as it is.

So there is ample precedent for rejection, and our dislike of those that are unlike us. There is nothing wrong *per se* in this dislike. What makes it right or wrong is the reason or motive back of it, which may be good or bad. The Pharisees hated Christ and compassed his death, and their name has been a stigma of scorn for twenty centuries. But Christ drove the money-lenders out of the Temple with a whip, and has never been charged with unbrotherliness or intolerance by any sane individual. He was interested only in the spiritual brotherhood of man, and was the sworn enemy of all that militated against it. A member of the T. S. has exactly the same obligation, and there is nothing in the entire philosophy to allow him to escape it. Evil must be overcome, if good is to triumph, and there is nothing intolerant in him who lends a helping hand. But the motive must be pure and genuine. Above all, he can best begin with himself. Granted the identity of motive, he will leave the other man to follow the method which suits him best and which will yield him

the best results. To do otherwise would be intolerant. Indeed, the practice of common sense and the rules of good manners will give a clearer perception of what constitutes true tolerance than pages of philosophical disquisition.

There is one other point. I have said that the various differences between men are natural and unavoidable. It may be suggested:—If the spiritual definition of Universal Brotherhood be correct, these differences are not natural and unavoidable. This may well be true ideally. It is quite probable that wrong-doing and sin have brought about the babel of tongues, the clash of interests, and the struggle of irreconcilable ambitions. But we have it; it is a fact; and the remedy does not lie in the proclamation of Universal Brotherhood on superficial grounds, nor in treating the bad and unfit with as much consideration as the good and the fit.

The external differences observed are fundamentally due to moral causes and to the infinite series of differences in spiritual development and vision. The entire absence of spiritual development gives rise to the ruthless and furious Bolshevik, instinctively hating the good and the noble, and demonstrating the monstrous evil of Selfishness. Great ignorance and great lack of vision evolved a primitive people like the Polynesians, who, however, implicitly obeyed the moral rules they had. The Chinese, beginning their civilization with much spiritual effort, became absorbed in contemplating what they had achieved in art, literature and noble philosophy, lived passively in their isolation for centuries, and made no further advance. The present civilizations of the Occident have considerable spiritual knowledge and light, but are neglecting it in a preference for, and eager search after, purely material prosperity and intellectual pursuits. Pride and cruelty ruined the greatness of Spain. A selfish and unmoral search for power nullified the several admirable qualities of the Germans. Italy, on the verge of chaos and a Red régime after the Great War, is now showing distinct signs of regeneration, thanks to the power of unselfish love of country, of a sufficiently large percentage of the people, ably led.

None of the peoples cited, however, has ever, as a race or nation, consistently sought spiritual development as their dominant interest and the motive of all their acts. This will be an experiment of the future. They have all shared certain qualities, certain salient faults, vices or virtues, the particular expression of which time has stamped with the epithet, racial characteristics, recognizable by themselves and all other peoples. Assuredly they must be reckoned with to-day, even if overcome to-morrow. In all ages, however, and among all races, *individuals* have believed in and striven for the spiritual destiny of the soul; and in any one generation they may well form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, without regard to race, creed, or colour.

BIOLOGIST.

ON THE SCREEN OF TIME

THE Philanderer, as we call him, is not a member of the Society, but has known many of us for years, and has read as much about Theosophy and Occultism as the average "old student." We were glad to see him, because we needed rousing, and knew it; and the Philanderer has an eye for weak spots in our armour.

He beamed at us. "How are you getting along?" he asked. "Not exhausted I hope! I have always told you that you ought to move to the Himalayas or to the North Pole during the summer months. The strenuous life has no place in tropical New York. Your Mahatmas know better. They have to keep busy in order to keep warm. Think of being pledged to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil, all day and all night, in yourself and outside yourself, with the thermometer at 90° and the humidity at 100 per cent plus! A nice scrape you've got yourselves into, because you can't do it: nobody could."

"There is a distinction between trying and achieving," the Student suggested rashly.

"Not much," the Philanderer answered. "If you try with faith and hope, you achieve; and I deny that you possess either faith or hope, and in that I am on safe ground, because you cannot possibly prove the contrary! The facts speak for themselves. Many of you call yourselves Christians, I believe. Further, you are members of The Theosophical Society. As members of The Theosophical Society, you are obliged to take your Christianity seriously. You are caught both ways. The normal Christian, baptized and confirmed, is pledged, like you, to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil; but he is not expected to do anything about it, and you are. Worse than that, you expect it of yourselves. What does it mean? Harmless as a glittering generality, it is the deuce and all when you come down to dots. Christ's battles in the world, everywhere—or wherever you are—and every minute. Sundays as bad as any other day. No rest. It means that you must fight dirt, or 'matter in the wrong place,' wherever you see it, and that you must attack every imperfection, in manners, as in morals, in understanding as in motive, in yourselves and in the world around you, with the fell determination to put perfection in its place. It exhausts me even to think of it—yet, for once, I will make the sacrifice. You must be logical. You can't, for instance, limit yourself to moral dirt. The universe is one. If you see dust on a table you must dash at it with the same zeal you would put into the defence of a soul against pollution. If a messenger boy is mannerless or rude, you must vigorously instruct him and, if necessary, carry your protest to his ultimate employer. Crowned heads should tremble before you, and messenger boys weep. They would, if your indignation were real and deep. Then, because Life is universal, you must

feel concern for a plant almost as for a man. If thirsty, the plant must be watered; if lop-sided, it must be straightened. Trees, flowers, insects, birds, houses, chairs, tables, men, women and children,—all, all, potentially at least, are Duties. There is no peace anywhere, except in Parabrahm,—and Parabrahm, as you declare, is neither here nor there. . . . Give me some soda-water, please."

The Philosopher never makes the mistake of acting on the defensive. "It is a disgrace," he said promptly, "that anyone with your understanding of the ideal, and with your imagination, should stay outside the ranks of those to whom you attribute so magnificent a purpose, so tremendous a task. You know as well as we do that the range of your sense of responsibility is the test of your development as an individual. If, like Pilate, you wash your hands of everything that spells trouble, or of everything that does not immediately affect your comfort, you write yourself down, either an embryo, or a soul that is retrograding."

"Embryo for mine!" said the Philanderer cheerfully.

"The trouble is you know too much," the Philosopher retorted. "A philosophizing, jeering, objecting embryo, won't do. You have seen the truth, or all you need to see of it, and it did not fit in with your personal desire. So, to ease your conscience, you called it names: you called it silly and unreasonable and fantastic, and you wound up by asserting to yourself that in any case it was not for you."

"There you are," expostulated the Philanderer; "at it again,—banging an imperfection! I'm full of them, of course; but surely by this time you might have discovered that I am impervious, impenetrable, immune,—and as self-satisfied as the messenger boy whose manners you try to coerce. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can persuade me that you are right and that I am wrong. There is but one thing that troubles me: your inability to learn from me, for I am a normal man, and you should realize, from your experience with me, the futility of your efforts to change anybody by one iota. I do not often preach, but you have reason to regard me as a living sermon, as the negation of all you assume."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Historian; "so you too have a mission."

"But see how modest: to bring the last touch of enlightenment to the unusually enlightened!" And he bowed with elaborate courtesy to each one of us.

"It's time to be serious," the Recorder protested. "I cannot fill the 'Screen' with your persiflage."

"I should like to concede something to the Philanderer, before we leave the subject," said the Philosopher. "I have a vague recollection that at the end of one of Herbert Spencer's last essays he declares that the older we grow, the more clearly we see how infinitely little we can accomplish in this world, but that we also see, with compensating clarity, how infinitely worth while it is to accomplish that infinitely little. Ergo, the smallest dent in the Philanderer's self-satisfaction (as he describes it), will be a colossal triumph. He

will never be aware of it in this life; but in his next life,—who knows!" It was his turn to bow to the Philanderer, and Louis XIV. would have approved the manner of it.

"My grandfather's favourite quotation might be introduced at this point," said our friend with the enviable memory: 'Duty is a power which rises with us in the morning and goes to rest with us at night. It is the shadow which clings to us, go where we will, and which only leaves us when we leave the light of life.'"

"My quarrel with the Philanderer is totally different," the Engineer remarked. "He underestimates the range of our accepted responsibility, while intending, perhaps, to exaggerate it. He made no mention of our mental and emotional reaction to the news of the day, or of our Karmic responsibility for the effects we thus produce, both on ourselves and others.

"What do I mean?

"I mean that if I read about the trial of those two depraved youths in Chicago, for instance, the reaction of my mind and feeling will influence them, for good or ill; will influence the opinion of the world, and necessarily must affect my own character and my future Karma. By reading about a thing, I relate myself to it, and become responsible morally for the least of the after-effects of my participation. Further, the same thing is true if I read about some event in history: my reaction, of approval or disapproval, of admiration or disgust, of idle comment or of moral determination,—my reaction to what I read is a force which reaches to and modifies the Karma of those involved, as well as affecting my own Karma."

"Do you think that if I read about Queen Elizabeth, let us say, my thought of her can influence her soul, wherever it is to-day?" It was the Lawyer who interjected this question.

"Depending of course upon the intensity of our thought, and upon the extent to which our reading, and, above all, our meditation, has brought us into rapport with the subject of our study; depending also upon the plane of consciousness upon which we are functioning, whether spiritual or purely mental,—I think we bring into play the tremendous power of *suggestion*—our thought, in nearly all cases, insinuating itself as one of the subject's own. But however that may be, the thinking about or feeling about Queen Elizabeth, as the result of reading about her, means that we are drawn into the stream of her Karma, for good or ill, to her and to ourselves, depending upon the nature of our reaction."

"Suppose we read about someone who was really a saint, though represented as a devil; and suppose we damn them unjustly?"

"My answer to that would be that our thoughts cannot reach an unreal and fictitious objective. We are responsible, doubtless, for hasty or ill-founded conclusions, and the author who misleads us must also bear the consequences of his perversion of the truth. My point is, however, that we relate ourselves Karmically with whatever attracts and holds our attention, and that the Philanderer greatly underestimated the range of our sense of responsibility."

"For pity's sake!" the Philanderer ejaculated. Then, as to himself: "Poor, hounded, misguided creatures!"

"Opportunity, opportunity," the Philosopher retorted. "And that reminds me: I have been reading *Le Retour de Barrès à sa terre et à ses morts*, by Henry Bordeaux. It is interesting, though not as great a tribute as I think might well have been paid to one who did so much toward winning the War. It serves to emphasize, however, the inspiration Barrès found in *nos seigneurs les morts*,—in the realization that he was, as it were, only a moment, a link, in an endless chain of ancestry.

"In his youth an intense individualist, he extended his understanding of individualism until it included the individuality of all the soil and soul of France, with the cemetery of his fathers in Lorraine as the thread on which his own life was strung. 'We are not,' he said, 'the masters of our own thoughts. Our reason—a queen in chains—compels us to follow in the footsteps of our predecessors. We are the increment and continuation of our parents. All the long line of descendants constitutes a single being. It is a marvellous pathway through time, wherein the individual forsakes himself to recover himself again in his family, in his race, in his nation, in the thousands of years which the tomb itself does not annul.' In this way, as Henry Bordeaux comments, 'our short life associates us with the things of eternity.'"

"What you have been quoting is Ancestor Worship, pure and simple," interjected the Orientalist.

"That is interesting," the Philosopher replied; "but Barrès re-discovered the principles for himself: he was not an echo. His convictions, whatever they were, came to him as the fruit of his own inner conflict. I do not mean that his ideas were peculiar to himself. He re-discovered a truth that has inspired all the great souls of France,—a truth supremely enunciated by Joan of Arc, though she would have regarded herself not so much as a link in a chain of national ancestry, as a thread in the string upon which the line of her Kings was strung. In any case, this *self-identification with the dead*—because that is what it comes to—this sense of responsibility to the dead (who made the present) for the future of the land they loved, is an enormous reinforcement, a most enviable incentive. I doubt if anyone can truly know it who does not live in the home of his ancestors, surrounded by evidences of their toil, of their prevision—and of their respect for chairs and tables, trees and hedges, which grandfathers and grandmothers had cherished before them. Joan was a peasant, but her family for centuries had lived where she lived."

"Even so," remarked the Student, "I think the feeling of which you speak, though often met with among the Latins, is foreign to the Anglo-Saxon temperament. Their patriotism is a personal matter, rather than an ancestral obligation. Our dead are stone dead,—not living influences. We hear a great deal in America, on the fourth of July, about 'the fathers of the country'; but I doubt if a single American who fought in the Great War, thought of Washington as a witness, still less as a judge of his deeds, or found the slightest reinforcement in the sense of carrying on a tradition. If any of them thought

of Grant or Lee, or of a grandfather who fought in the Civil War, it would have been with a sense of separateness, and of superiority, as if to say, 'This would have taught them a thing or two!'"

"A witty Frenchman falsely attributed to a German prisoner the remark that the Americans were not fighting for their country, but for souvenirs: he had been marched through their ranks, and he hadn't a button left on him anywhere!" This was from the Student.

"Don't be frivolous!" the Englishman expostulated, laughing. "You know as well as I do that Americans fought for their country, and with superb bravery, even if they did think of it as 'my' rather than as 'our' in the very wide sense given to 'our' by Barrès." Then, turning to the Philosopher, he added: "If you favour Nationalism in France, do you also favour it in Germany?"

"I do not," the Philosopher answered emphatically. "We have to remember that Nationalism, or Ancestor Worship (and I do not mean really to make the terms synonymous) tends to accentuate existing characteristics, by reverence for similar traits in the past. Thus, no one will deny that Barrès preached admiration for nobility, courage, sacrifice, unselfishness, simplicity, and for all the virtues of old-time family life in France. His instincts, his desires, were those of France herself, and were in no way *predatory*. The Nationalism of Germany, on the other hand, is predatory from start to finish. 'We preach *hardness*,' as Nietszche expressed it: 'be hard.' Why do the German Nationalists make so much of their Frederick the Great? It is not only because he was successful; it is because he was unscrupulous, predatory, and utterly contemptuous of his own people. It is one of the most marked traits in German national life that one half the people bitterly despise the other half—the 'hard' despising the 'sentimental,' and of course failing to see that 'hardness' and 'sentimentality' are simply different manifestations of one and the same thing: self-admiration. William, now of Doorn, was apoplectic with self-esteem. He ought to be thankful for the war because, though it could not reduce him to sanity, it did save him from bursting."

"We've switched you from the Moral of your tale," the Student now remarked, addressing the Philosopher. "Barrès was a peg, was he not?"

"He was," the Philosopher admitted; "though, to have been as transparent as all that" (gazing blandly at the Student), "is really appalling! However, —to jump now to my Moral: granting that Americans are too young as a race, or too Anglo-Saxon, or too anything you choose, to identify themselves with their dead, as was easy for Barrès (though I do not agree that this is a Latin prerogative, the old Scotch clans still being inspired by it), it is none the less true that we should stand on much more solid ground, both intellectually and morally, if the facts permitted us this sense of continuity. Further—and this is my Moral—it is of the utmost importance that students of Theosophy should recognize the advantage of that sort of background, which is also an objective, and should deliberately supplement their present efforts by studying the history of the age-long Theosophical Movement, and by seeing themselves

as links in the chain of its progression. To think of ourselves as members of The Theosophical Society, founded in New York in 1875, is not enough. We should then, by analogy, be like the man who thinks of himself simply as 'John Jones,' without ancestry, without past lives or a Karma, and without liability for the future. As individuals, not many of us can remember our own past lives, though, as students of Theosophy, we find ourselves compelled to believe in them, if only to explain an experience otherwise inexplicable; but the past incarnations, or manifestations, of the Theosophical Movement, are in many cases historical events, easily recognized; and with these we ought to make ourselves familiar, so that we may 'identify ourselves with our dead,' and work in eternity as well as in time."

"I agree with you absolutely," said the Historian, when the Philosopher had finished; "but I think we do not begin to use the inspiration of our immediate past as we might and should use it,—I mean the past of 'John Jones,' of The Theosophical Society founded in New York in 1875. We deprive ourselves, in that way, of half our strength. Take Madame Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge: neither of them perfect of course; but if the Society as a whole had one tenth part of their zeal, of their devotion, our ranks to-day would be packed with chelas! I am afraid that if we think of H. P. B. at all, it is with mild wonder, and perhaps also with a gentle gratitude which would have driven that extraordinary woman to desperation."

"She certainly was extraordinary, and in more senses than one," the Student commented, smiling at the Historian's picture. "I shall never forget the description of her by that unspeakable cad, Solovyoff, the Russian journalist, who admitted that he posed as a devoted friend in the hope of proving her a charlatan, and who certainly did his utmost to injure her, but who, without pity, honour, or understanding, unintentionally revealed her heroism. It was after her last return from India. She was at Wurzburg, writing the *Secret Doctrine*. Solovyoff was there to 'spy out the land.' H. P. B's servant informed him one day that 'Madame' was very ill. Solovyoff hurried to her house and found a doctor in the sitting-room. 'To my inquiry' (Solovyoff wrote) 'about his patient, he replied: "I never saw anything like it in the whole course of my many years of practice. She has several mortal diseases—an ordinary person would have been dead long ago from any one of them. But hers is a phenomenal nature; and if she has lived so long, she may, for all we can tell, live on yet."

"'For the moment then her life is not in danger?'

"'"Her life has been in danger for years, but you see she is alive. A wonderful, wonderful phenomenon."

"'He had all the appearance of a man who was deeply interested.

"'I again found Helena Petrovna all swollen up and almost without movement. But a day passed, and *she managed to crawl out of her bed to her writing-table, and wrote for several hours, gnashing her teeth with anguish* . . . pages and sheets were pouring from her pen at an astonishing rate.'

"Then, for another side of her," continued the Student, "do you remember

her editorial excuse, in an early number of the magazine she was editing? It was in India, in 1882. She had been gravely reproached by an F. T. S. for lack of charity and of brotherliness when berating a certain Mr. Cook, who had been specially imported from America by the missionaries, she said, to attack the Theosophical Society. It was true, in any case, that she had filled pages of her magazine with replies to his attacks. Publishing the reproach in full, H. P. B. excused herself as follows: 'Let it be conceded that we gave too much notice to Mr. Cook—that we admitted to our columns, letters and articles that we had better have suppressed. Well, he was aggravating, and we were angry—he made faces at us and we boxed his ears. . . . We can truly say that having let off the steam, we do not bear the poor deluded man any grudge.' She went on to say that of course the perfect Buddha would not have done it, but then she was not the perfect Buddha, neither, so far as she was aware, was her present accuser! How the high gods must have laughed! But that was the H. P. B. of earlier years, with the vitality of a Titan,—not yet weary."

"You will find an interesting sketch of her in the October issue of the QUARTERLY," remarked the Engineer. "It is taken from *Affinities*, a novel of the early eighties, by Mrs. Campbell Praed."

"How about the new volume of *Mahatma Letters?*" the Student suggested. "You were rash enough to promise a discussion of them in the 'Screen,' and you'll have to make good! From my standpoint, they give rise to so many questions that I should not know where to begin. For one thing, I should not blame the average reader if he inferred that their authors were Atheists, and also bitterly anti-Christian."

"The letters certainly need a commentary," said the Ancient. "Think of *any* letters of that period—say the letters of Gladstone—being read without knowledge of what provoked them, or of the political, scientific and theological problems of his contemporaries! For one thing, the Mahatma letters must remain incomprehensible unless recognized as combative, and unless we know what it was they were combatting. The European world of 1880 was viciously narrow-minded. It was divided into three parts, each part rivalling the others in bigotry. There were the hide-bound theologians, followed by all the respectable, unthinking multitude; the materialists who called themselves scientific, with their multitude of unthinking followers; the spiritualists, particularly active in America, who were as 'set' as either of the other groups and whose practices were perhaps the most dangerous, morally, of any. In India, the situation was different. The young men of India, at that time, were saturating themselves with the jargon of western science, and were beginning to treat their own literature with disdain. There were plenty of Brahmins who knew their sacred books in a dead-letter, meaningless way, which the younger men knew to be nonsensical, but there was no one to give them the true and mystical interpretation. In other words, both in Europe and in India, materialism was rampant, theology and spiritualism being just as materialistic as the 'science' of Clifford and Lange and Weismann.

"Even that, however, is too general a statement to supply the necessary

background. The writers of those letters were not only trying to break 'the moulds of mind,' and to induce a state of genuine receptivity; they were hitting, as hard as they were able, at certain definite illusions which they knew to be stultifying, and which, until removed, would act as an insuperable barrier to progress. One of these illusions was the belief in a personal God, *as that belief was then interpreted*. The common understanding was that God did everything and was responsible for everything. There were laws of nature, truly; but, having made these laws, God could set them aside at will, so that if it rained too much or too little, if plagues devastated or earthquakes destroyed,—this Person could interfere if he felt like doing so, quite regardless of human conduct and of the order of nature. Above all, and most important of all, this personal God could forgive sins, not only as a father can forgive his child, but in the sense of obliterating the consequences of sin. Read the Church Prayer Book to-day, in its dead-letter, and you will find, that Christ having made a complete and sufficient atonement for all our sins, if we believe in that atonement, we shall be saved, that is, we shall go to heaven. The esoteric meaning of the atonement, of the 'propitiation' —that Christ established and maintains an infinite fund of 'merit' for us to draw upon if we *will*—is understood by very few, even now; but in 1880 it was practically unknown, with the result that Christianity, as perverted by man to disarm his own conscience, had become a terrible spiritual danger. In that sense and for that reason, the Masters hated it,—none of them more so than the Master Christ himself.

"To imagine that you can spiritualize an established, exoteric religion by enlightening the multitude, is a folly of which the Masters certainly are not capable. They know that the only way to do it is to instruct the few, whose influence will extend to many, with the hope that among the few there may develop an inner group of chelas. Their problem in 1880, was to instruct the few. It has often been said by regular Army officers that it is easier to train a raw recruit whose mind is a blank and whose movements are haphazard, than a militiaman whose mind and movements have been trained wrongly. For the same reasons, the Masters were compelled, when they came to deal with 'Christians,' to break all their mental moulds as a preliminary to esoteric instruction. Their intention is proved by the result: a number of people, under their influence, who for years never thought in Christian terms, and whose minds were saturated with the principles of Theosophy, finally were turned to the study of the religion in which they were born. Their approach was fresh, unbiassed, delighted. Nothing was stale, nothing was predetermined. The interpretation of Councils and Bishops and theologians, had a certain historical interest, but had no practical or personal influence whatsoever. I doubt if anything like it had been done before in the history of Christianity,—that is, I doubt if any group of people had been so completely liberated from theological preconception, while increasing ultimately their devotion to Christ as a living Master, infinitely more worthy of love and reverence because an Elder Brother instead of an extra-Cosmic God. I know whereof I speak, because, thanks to this method of treatment, I literally never

gave Christianity a thought for years, until, following the same guidance, I suddenly bought a Bible and read, as if for the first time, parts of the Sermon on the Mount, to find it overwhelmingly beautiful, and to find Theosophy restated on every page."

"But how about the assertion, somewhere in the Letters, that the laws of nature, being immutable, must be blind, and require no guiding hand?"

"That question was answered years ago, in 1884. The writer meant that the *inherent* impulse acts blindly, in the sense that no extraneous or extranatural power pushes it, this way or that. Electricity, for instance, follows the laws of its own being; its action is not dependent upon the caprice of a God outside the universe."

"In addition to what you have suggested," the Historian volunteered, "don't you think we should keep very clearly in mind the peculiarities of the two men to whom the Letters were addressed, remembering also that, as a rule, the letters addressed to one were shown by him to the other? Certainly the writers of those letters were not 'firing into the brown,' so to speak, but were addressing individuals whose limitations they understood, painfully well. Hume, one of the recipients, was constantly telling the Masters that they did not know their business, and that he did, and that, incidentally, if they did not believe in his personal God, he knew better. Sinnett, on the other hand, frankly admitted that he would not bother about them except for his affectionate admiration for Master K. H., and that his motives, at least to that extent, were personal. I speak of this because it is so evident, from the letters, that every effort was made by the writers to belittle themselves. I know that 'belittle' is not the right word, but I cannot think of a better one. They wanted these men to work for a Cause, for the greatest of all Causes; and they were not satisfied to have their Cause confused with themselves. The fact is that Masters look like gods—magnificent, majestic, with a radiance of spiritual splendour that lays men prostrate. People already were speaking of them in a way that presaged the 'Their Blessed Feet' of twenty years later; and the Masters had no desire to be added to the galaxy of celestial Preservers. On the contrary, they wanted to emphasize their humanity, so that men might not think it impossible to become what they had become. Even to-day, in spite of the Masters' efforts, there are many good people who feel it would be presumptuous and almost blasphemous, deliberately to set out to become Adepts. Yet that was exactly what the Masters insisted should be done, and that is why the writers of the Letters—fearing to appear too remote—leaned down so far toward the level of men like Hume and Sinnett, almost as we might go on all-fours and make childish jokes in a nursery of infants. The trouble was, of course, that the infants in this case thought themselves to be conferring, instead of receiving favours. Chela means a child; but the hearts of children they did not have. Heaven grant that we do not fail as they did!"

"Have you ever tried to imagine yourself in the place of Masters in 1875, and at the time these Letters were written?" the Student asked. "I have, and my belief is that they were horribly 'up against it,' if I may be pardoned

expressive slang. Lay out for yourself a different programme, and see its impossibility. Imagine, for instance, the advent of a St. Germain, at the court of Queen Victoria, or at the Élysée, with Thiers or Grévy as President, or in Berlin, with the first William on the throne and Bismarck in command! Imagine anything you choose, and see the insuperable obstacles. What has happened is little short of miraculous,—the very subject of our conversation, and its publication in the QUARTERLY, being evidence enough of the wedge which the Masters have driven into the iron-clad skull of the world.

T.

A child should be made to learn tact: frankness is a revolver which must not be discharged under the nose of the passerby.—LACORDAIRE.

LETTERS TO STUDENTS

March 13th, 1913.

DEAR——

I have not forgotten that you are to have a talk with ——. Why not ask for it yourself? You will get more if *you* make the demand.

As I have said before, your mind is your great barrier. You want to understand everything,—yourself among other things; and one of the limitations which you should accept is your lack of understanding of yourself; your lack of ability to explain yourself by your mind. I have been told to tell you this, it is not merely my opinion.

If you would spend the same amount of time and energy in trying to acquire some virtue, which you spend in trying to work out in your mind how you ought to try to acquire it, you would accomplish much. If you prayed, instead of trying to understand the nature, and method, and rationale of prayer, you would accomplish more.

Most of your record is a constant "I wonder why—!" "I do not understand." And both are unnecessary. The "why" of a thing, at this stage, is not necessary for you, nor the understanding of things.

You need simplicity,—simple acceptance, simple faith and obedience, followed by action. Do things, even if they seem foolish to your mind. Pray to the Master, even if your mind does not know how, or what to say, or why you should. *You* know, the real you, which lies below the barriers which your education and practical work-a-day life have superimposed.

You say you do not know what the ideal woman ought to be, and so do not know what to work at and for. But the truth is that you are a very real and fine *woman*, down deep. Be that. Let it come to the surface, and break through mental and other crusts.

If you were going to marry someone in five years, whom you loved devotedly, with your whole nature, and you wanted to make yourself an ideal mate for him, what would you do? No man cares for intellect in a woman, but he wants and needs inspiration, sympathy, love, obedience, sweetness, good temper, *purity*, a sure instinct for what is right, firmness where firmness is called for, self-sacrifice, unselfishness; and then he wants lesser, but still important things;—he wants perfect manners, good looks, good clothes, graciousness, ease, *savoir faire*, and many other qualities you know as well as I do. Save good looks, which will come in time, and are of the least importance, there is no single one of all these things you cannot deliberately cultivate and acquire.

The Master wants them all, and as a disciple you must have them all; and not much else is necessary (at your point of development), save the conscious and incessant desire to be a disciple.

One thing more; the true woman must know when to give and when to with-

hold, and must have the strength and courage, and it takes much of both, to be able to withhold when that is best. Many women have learned to give, and it is their nature; but only the very finest learn the next step, and that is to refuse something to those they love. You should practise this in all relations in life. It is one of the things you need to learn.

* * * * * * * *

The plain fact is that there is no reason why the members of —— should agree. They are not expected to agree. But they *are* expected to disagree with good temper and without *personal* heat. You are all different notes, or different instruments in an orchestra. You play, and you should play, different notes, and it would be silly to try and play the same. The law of harmony is not that you should all play the same note, but that you should play your different notes without discord. It is the sentimental side of you which desires that you should all play the same note. Sentimentality is a false unity or harmony, or a desire for these where they do not and cannot exist.

But it is late. Please excuse such a very long letter.

Sincerely,

C. A. Griscom, Jr.

March 17th, 1913.

Dear——

In response to the specific questions in your last report:—

At the next meeting of ——, please bring the problem up and put it before them just as you have before me; *i.e.* that your experience has been that no one ever correctly reports another; that in consequence you are not prepared to accept dicta as transmitted through one of them; that this places you in the position of not giving credence to one of your fellows—and what are you going to do about it?

Your reports are not at all a record of your "life, attitude, and effort." They are a report of what you think your life, attitude, and effort are, which, fortunately for you, is a very different thing.

Your attitude is made up of an infinitude of trifling actions, mostly instinctive and unconscious, which represent the real "you." The moment you become conscious of any one of them, your mind begins to influence your actions,—all sorts of prejudices, sentimentalities, wrong ideas, etc., become operative, and you become more or less artificial. But I know of no way to record the real "you" until you are it more fully. You might try to watch (after the event) your unconscious and undeliberate acts.

With best wishes,

I am, sincerely,

C. A. Griscom, Jr.

April 16, 1913.

DEAR——

The reason why you do not ask questions is shyness—you are very shy. Shyness is a form of vanity. We are afraid of the effect we shall create if we do anything,—whether talk or action, it does not matter what.

One very good way for you to overcome it, and other troubles of a similar kind, is to think less of yourself, your feelings, your thoughts,—and more of what would be useful for the sake of your fellows. Instead of thinking how much you get or can get out of a meeting—think how much you can get out of it for the others, and try to get more.

There are many reasons why we feel strain in doing our daily work. The real reason is because we have to learn to work properly under conditions that create strain, for by so doing we remove the defects that create the strain. You have hit on one of them. Lack of proportion is another. We fail to realize the utter unimportance of most of the things we do. It really does not matter to anyone, living or dead, whether we do them or not. What matters is how we do them, the spirit we put into the doing, and *why* we do them. Is it for ourselves, or for the Master, etc., etc?

I think you would be wise to make a definite effort to have a talk with ——.

With kindest regards,

I am, sincerely,

C. A. GRISCOM, JR.

Monday, June 1st, 1913.

DEAR——

I have your note expressing surprise at the advice, or lack of it, in my letter of Saturday. It may be well to clear up the point.

I have no right to advise you about your personal duty. If you come to me for advice about such a thing, all I can do, or should attempt to do, is: (a) Speak of such fundamental principles as seem to me to throw light on the point. Very often such light is so clear and decided that there does not seem to be much of an alternative left, and it seems, therefore, as if I told you very definitely what to do. At other times, the issue is clouded and the underlying principle is anything but clear, at any rate to you; and you feel that you were not helped at all. (b) I can give you the result of my own experience. As for instance, if you asked my advice about investing money, I could refuse to give advice, which would be the wisest thing to do; or I could be foolhardy, and give you the benefit of such knowledge as I had on that particular point.

In either event, it is *your* duty to make up *your* mind about it.

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Even if I had very decided opinions, I should have had no right to voice them and to take the responsibility of a decision. Only a Master can do that

after he takes over the Karma of an individual, and only an accepted Chela is entitled to such help.

I wrote this last Monday when I received your letter, and have been holding it deliberately until the whole matter was settled and it could not upset you.

Yours sincerely,

C. A. GRISCOM, JR.

June 24th, 1913.

DEAR——

I have your very kind note. Please do not hesitate to "ask for more." In so far as any of us are faithful in reflecting, in the remotest degree, some of the Master's virtues, our greatest reward is to have people ask for more.

So far as a vacation is concerned, I agree with *you*. A quiet time at home, doing work you love, would, I think, do you much more good than an enforced vacation. Can you not stay at home for a week or two, get all your home work into shape, help ——, take things easy, and later on, during the summer, get off for a change if you feel like it then?

As always,

C. A. GRISCOM, JR.

August 4th, 1913.

DEAR——

I return your last record.

Every barrier which separates us from the Master is some form of self-will. Often this takes a very subtle form.

We can be and are given hints as to its form, but to cure a fault, we must recognize it as one, for ourselves. It is already half cured when we recognize it. You have been told some of yours. If that does not help you much, and apparently it does not, it means that you do not yet see that those things are faults, and why and how they are faults. Time is often necessary, and further experience.

Light on the Path says "Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, yet eagerly anxious," etc. It seems to me that you analyse every movement of every little shoot you put forth. Cannot you do it all more simply and naturally? And stop fussing about what you do not understand, both in yourself and in the universe? Both would get along better. It is the effort we make to fulfil our rule which counts, not the results we see. It is the faithfulness, the earnestness, the devotion,—not what we accomplish, or what we understand. Understanding is valuable in order to make renewed and intelligent effort, but do not forget that we always understand all we need for our next and immediate step. The soul is never left bewildered, unless, as sometimes happens, bewilderment is the particular lesson to be learnt by that soul. That, I think, is not the case

with you. Just the contrary. You *think* you are bewildered, but really are not;—really know all you need to know to take your next steps.

It is really all so simple, and we make it so complicated!

I am sorry we have not had talks, but, at present, I do not think you need them, or that anything would be gained by them.

With kind regards,

I am, sincerely,

C. A. Griscom, Jr.

September 12th, 1913.

Dear——

I return your records. I am sorry for the delay in going over them. I have made some comments on the backs of the opposite pages. I am also directed to send you the enclosed comment on a report. . . .

Comment: In reply to your question about meditation, I am directed to say that the best method for you to follow at present is to read some spiritual book, such as certain parts of Faber's *All for Jesus*, or *The Imitation*, or any other book that appeals to you, and to read slowly, brooding over the import and meaning of what you read,—breaking into brief prayer of adoration or of petition or of thanksgiving, when your heart opens in that way, making some definite resolution—such as to repeat certain words during the day, with a certain intention, or whatever your reading may have suggested.

The purpose of this is to bring you to converse naturally and simply with the Master, as your heart dictates. You should also make it a rule to listen quietly after each prayer, not so much with the idea of "hearing," as to receive from Him whatever it may be His wish to bestow—perhaps His silent blessing.

To read of some incident in the New Testament; to imagine it; to think about it; to imagine yourself an actor,—as blind and asking to be given sight: this also may serve to bring the heart to brief but deep and overflowing prayer, which is, in truth, only another way of saying that it brings you directly into *rapport* with the heart of the Master.

This is meditation. Contemplation is a result, which will come in time but which cannot and should not be sought directly.

With kind regards,

I am, sincerely,

C. A. Griscom, Jr.

The only good way of acting in the world, is to be with it but not to belong to it.
Mme. Swetchine.

THE "ELIXIR OF LIFE"*

From a Chela's[1] Diary

And Enoch walked with the Elohim, and the Elohim took him.—GENESIS.

Introduction

[The curious information—for whatsoever else the world may think of it, it will doubtless be acknowledged to be that—contained in the article that follows, merits a few words of introduction. The details given in it on the subject of what has always been considered as one of the darkest and most strictly guarded of the mysteries of initiation into Occultism—from the days of the Rishis until those of the Theosophical Society—came to the knowledge of the author in a way that would seem to the ordinary run of Europeans strange and supernatural. He, himself, however, we may assure the reader, is a most thorough disbeliever in the *supernatural*, though he has learned too much to limit the capabilities of the *natural* as some do. Further, he has to make the following confession of his own belief. It will be apparent, from a careful perusal of the facts, that if the matter be really as stated herein, the autnor cannot himself be an adept of high grade, as the article in such a case *would never have been written.* Nor does he pretend to be one. He is, or rather was, for a few years a humble Chela. Hence, the converse must consequently be also true, that as regards the higher stages of the mystery he can have no personal experience, but speaks of it only as a close observer left to his own surmises—and no more. He may, therefore, boldly state that during, and notwithstanding, his unfortunately rather too short stay with some adepts, he has by actual experiment and observation verified some of the less transcendental or incipient parts of the "course." And, though it will be impossible for him to give positive testimony as to what lies beyond, he may yet mention that all his own course of study, training and experience, long, severe and dangerous as it has often been, leads him to the conviction that everything is really as stated, save some details *purposely veiled.* For causes which cannot be explained to the public, he himself may be unable or unwilling to use the secret he has gained access to. Still he is permitted by one to whom all his reverential affection and gratitude are due—his last Guru—to divulge for the benefit of science and man, and especially for the good of those who are courageous enough to personally make the experiment, the following astounding particulars of the occult methods for prolonging life to a period far beyond the common.—G. M.]

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* Reprinted from *Five Years of Theosophy.* All the footnotes are those of the original article. The signature ED. refers to the editor of the magazine in which the article was first published (Madame Blavatsky).—EDITORS OF THE QUARTERLY.

[1] A Chela is the pupil and disciple of an initiated Guru or Master.—ED.

PROBABLY one of the first considerations which move the worldly-minded at present to solicit initiation into Theosophy is the belief, or hope, that, immediately on joining, some extraordinary advantage over the rest of mankind will be conferred upon the candidate. Some even think that the ultimate result of their initiation will perhaps be exemption from that dissolution which is called the common lot of mankind. The traditions of the "Elixir of Life," said to be in the possession of Kabalists and Alchemists, are still cherished by students of Mediæval Occultism—in Europe. The allegory of the Ab-é Hyat or Water of Life, is still credited as a fact by the degraded remnants of the Asiatic esoteric sects ignorant of the *real* Great Secret. The "pungent and fiery essence," by which Zanoni renewed his existence, still fires the imagination of modern visionaries as a possible scientific discovery of the future.

Theosophically, though the fact is distinctly declared to be true, the above-named conceptions of the mode of procedure leading to the realization of the fact, are *known* to be false. The reader may or may not believe it; but as a matter of fact, Theosophical Occultists claim to have communication with (living) Intelligences possessing an infinitely wider range of observation than is contemplated even by the loftiest aspirations of modern science, all the present "Adepts" of Europe and America—dabblers in the Kabalah—notwithstanding. But far even as those superior Intelligences have investigated (or, if preferred, are alleged to have investigated), and remotely as they may have searched by the help of inference and analogy, even They have failed to discover in the Infinity anything permanent but—Space. *All is subject to change.* Reflection, therefore, will easily suggest to the reader the further logical inference that in a universe which is essentially impermanent in its conditions, nothing can confer permanency. Therefore, no possible substance, even if drawn from the depths of Infinity; no imaginable combination of drugs, whether of our earth or any other, though compounded by even the Highest Intelligence; no system of life or discipline though directed by the sternest determination and skill, could possibly produce Immutability. For in the universe of solar systems, wherever and however investigated, Immutability necessitates "Non-Being" in the physical sense given it by the Theists—Non-Being which is *nothing* in the narrow conceptions of *Western* Religionists—a *reductio ad absurdum.* This is a gratuitous insult even when applied to the Pseudo-Christian or ecclesiastical Jehovite idea of God.

Consequently, it will be seen that the common ideal conception of "Immortality" is not only essentially wrong, but a physical and metaphysical impossibility. The idea, whether cherished by Theosophists or Non-Theosophists, by Christians or Spiritualists, by Materialists or Idealists, is a chimerical illusion. But the actual prolongation of human life is possible for a time so long as to appear miraculous and incredible to those who regard our span of existence as necessarily limited to at most a couple of hundred years. We may break, as it were, the shock of death, and instead of dying, change a sudden plunge into darkness to a transition into a brighter light. And this may be made so gradual that the passage from one state of existence to another shall have its friction minimized so as to be practically imperceptible. This is a very different matter, and quite within the reach of Occult Science. In this, as in all other cases, means properly directed will gain their ends, and causes produce effects. Of course, the only question is, what are these causes, and how, in their turn, are they to be produced. To lift, as far as may be allowed, the veil from this aspect of Occultism, is the object of the present paper.

We must premise by reminding the reader of two Theosophic doctrines, constantly inculcated in *Isis Unveiled* and in other mystic works; namely, (*a*) that ultimately the Kosmos is *one*—one under infinite variations and manifestations, and (*b*) that the so-called *man* is a "compound being"—composite not only in the exoteric scientific sense of being a congeries of living so-called material units, but also in the esoteric sense of being a succession of seven forms or parts of itself, inter-blended with each other. To put it more clearly, we might say that the more ethereal forms are but duplicates of the same aspect—each finer one lying within the interatomic spaces of the next grosser. We would have the reader understand that these are no subtleties, no "spiritualities" at all in the Christo-spiritualistic sense. In the actual man reflected in your mirror are really several men, or several parts of one composite man; each the

exact counterpart of the other, but the "atomic conditions" (for want of a better word) of each of which are so arranged that its atoms interpenetrate those of the next "grosser" form. It does not, for our present purpose, matter how the Theosophists, Spiritualists, Buddhists, Kabalists, or Vedantists, count, separate, classify, arrange or name these, as that war of terms may be postponed to another occasion. Neither does it matter what relation each of these men has to the various "elements" of the Kosmos of which he forms a part. This knowledge, though of vital importance in other respects, need not be explained or discussed now. Nor does it much more concern us that the scientists deny the existence of such an arrangement, because their instruments are inadequate to make their senses perceive it. We will simply reply, "Get better instruments and keener senses, and *eventually* you will."

All we have to say is that if you are anxious to drink of the "Elixir of Life," and live a thousand years or so, you must take our word for the matter at present, and proceed on the assumption. For esoteric science does not give the faintest possible hope that the desired end will ever be attained by any other way; while modern, or so-called exact science—laughs at it.

So, then, we have arrived at the point where we have determined—literally, *not* metaphorically—to crack the outer shell known as the mortal coil or body, and hatch out of it, clothed in our next. This "next" is not spiritual, but only a more ethereal form. Having by a long training and preparation adapted it for a life in this atmosphere, during which time we have gradually made the outward shell to die off through a certain process (hints of which will be found further on) we have to prepare for this physiological transformation.

How are we to do it? In the first place we have the actual, visible, material body—man, so called; though, in fact, but his outer shell—to deal with. Let us bear in mind that science teaches us that in about every seven years we *change skin* as effectually as any serpent; and this so gradually and imperceptibly that, had not science after years of unremitting study and observation assured us of it, no one would have had the slightest suspicion of the fact.

We see, moreover, that in process of time any cut or lesion upon the body, however deep, has a tendency to repair the loss and reunite; a piece of lost skin is very soon replaced by another. Hence, if a man, partially flayed alive, may sometimes survive and be covered with a new skin, so our astral, vital body—the fourth of the seven (having attracted and assimilated to itself the second) which is so much more ethereal than the physical one—may be made to harden its particles to the atmospheric changes. The whole secret is to succeed in evolving it out, and separating it from the visible; and while its generally invisible atoms proceed to concrete themselves into a compact mass, to gradually get rid of the old particles of our visible frame so as to make them die and disappear before the new set has had time to evolve and replace them. . . . We can say no more. The Magdalene is not the only one who could be accused of having "seven spirits" in her, though men who have a lesser number of spirits (what a misnomer that word!) in them, are not few or exceptional; they are the frequent failures of nature—the incomplete men and women.[2] Each of these has in turn to survive the preceding and more dense one, and then *die*. The exception is the sixth when absorbed into and blended with the *seventh*. The Dhatu[3] of the old Hindu physiologist had a dual meaning, the esoteric side of which corresponds with the Tibetan Zung (seven principles of the body).

We Asiatics have a proverb, probably handed down to us, and by the Hindus repeated ignorantly as to its esoteric meaning. It has been known ever since the old Rishis mingled familiarly with the simple and noble people they taught and led on. The Devas had whispered into every man's ear, *Thou only*—if thou wilt—art "immortal." Combine with this the saying of a Western author that if any man could just realize for an instant, that he had to die some day, he would die that instant. The Illuminated will perceive that between these two

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[2] This is not to be taken as meaning that such persons are thoroughly destitute of some one or several of the seven principles: a man born without an arm has still its ethereal counterpart; but that they are so latent that they cannot be developed, and consequently are to be considered as non-existing.—Ed. *Theos.*

[3] Dhatu, the seven principal substances of the human body—chyle, flesh, blood, fat, bones, marrow, semen.

sayings, rightly understood, stands revealed the whole secret of longevity. We only die when our will ceases to be strong enough to make us live. In the majority of cases, death comes when the torture and vital exhaustion accompanying a rapid change in our physical conditions becomes so intense as to weaken, for one single instant, our "clutch on life," or the tenacity of the will to exist. Till then, however severe may be the disease, however sharp the pang, we are only sick or wounded, as the case may be. This explains the cases of sudden deaths from joy, fright, pain, grief, or such other causes. The sense of a life-task consummated, of the worthlessness of one's existence, *if strongly realized*, produces death as surely as poison or a rifle-bullet. On the other hand, a stern determination to continue to live, has, in fact, carried many through the crises of the most severe diseases, in perfect safety.

First, then, must be the determination—the *will*—the conviction of certainty, to survive and continue.[4] Without that, all else is useless. And to be efficient for the purpose, it must be, not only a passing resolution of the moment, a single fierce desire of short duration, but *a settled and continued strain, as nearly as can be continued and concentrated without one single moment's relaxation.* In a word, the would-be "Immortal" must be on his watch night and day, guarding self against—himself. To live—to live—to live—must be his unswerving resolve. He must as little as possible allow himself to be turned aside from it. It may be said that this is the most concentrated form of selfishness; that it is utterly opposed to our Theosophic professions of benevolence, and disinterestedness, and regard for the good of humanity. Well, viewed in a short-sighted way, it is so. But to do good, as in everything else, a man *must have* time and materials to work with, and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than without them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive, for there comes a moment when further watch and exertion are no longer needed—the moment when the turning-point is safely passed. For the present as we deal with aspirants and not with advanced Chelas, in the first stage a determined, dogged resolution, and an enlightened concentration of self on self, are all that is absolutely necessary. It must not, however, be considered that the candidate is required to be unhuman or brutal in his negligence of others. Such recklessly selfish course would be as injurious to him as the contrary one of expending his vital energy on the gratification of his physical desires. All that is required from him is a purely negative attitude. Until the turning-point is reached, he must not "lay out" his energy in lavish or fiery devotion to any cause, however noble, however "good," however elevated.[5] Such, we can solemnly assure the reader, would bring its reward in many ways—perhaps in another life, perhaps in this world, but it would tend to shorten the existence it is desired to preserve, as surely as self-indulgence and profligacy. That is why very few of the truly great men of the world (of course, the unprincipled adventurers

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[4] Colonel Olcott has epigrammatically explained the creative or rather the re-creative power of the will, in his *Buddhist Catechism.* He there shows—of course, speaking on behalf of the Southern Buddhists—that this *will to live*, if not extinguished in the present life, leaps over the chasm of bodily death, and re-combines the Skandhas, or groups of qualities that made up the individual into a new personality. Man is, therefore, reborn as the result of his own unsatisfied yearning for objective existence. Colonel Olcott puts it in this way:

Q. 123. . . . *What is that, in man, which gives him the impression of having a permanent individuality?*

A. Tanha, or the unsatisfied desire for existence. The being having done that for which he must be rewarded or punished in future, and having Tanha, will have a rebirth through the influence of Karma.

Q. 124. *What is it that is reborn?*

A. A new aggregation of Skandhas, or individuality, caused by the last yearning of the dying person.

Q. 128. *To what cause must we attribute the differences in the combination of the Five Skandhas which makes every individual differ from every other individual?*

A. To the Karma of the individual in the next preceding birth.

Q. 129. *What is the force or energy that is at work, under the guidance of Karma, to produce the new being?*

A. Tanha—the "*will to live.*"

[5] On page 151 of Mr. Sinnett's *Occult World*, the author's much abused, and still more doubted correspondent assures him that none yet of his "degree are like the stern hero of Bulwer's *Zanoni* . . . the heartless morally dried up mummies some would fancy us to be": . . . and adds that few of them "would care to play the part in life of a desiccated pansy between the leaves of a volume of solemn poetry." But our Adept omits saying that *one or two degrees higher*, and he will have to submit for a period of years to such a mummifying process, unless, indeed, he would voluntarily give up a life-long labour and—die.—ED.

who have applied great powers to bad uses are out of the question)—the martyrs, the heroes, the founders of religions, the liberators of nations, the leaders of reforms—ever became members of the long-lived "Brotherhood of Adepts" who were by some and for long years accused of *selfishness*. (And that is also why the Yogis, and the Fakirs of modern India—most of whom are acting now but on the *dead-letter* tradition, are required if they would be considered living up to the principles of their profession—to appear *entirely dead* to every inward feeling or emotion.) Notwithstanding the purity of their hearts, the greatness of their aspirations, the disinterestedness of their self-sacrifice, *they could not live for they had missed the hour*. They may at times have exercised powers which the world called miraculous; they may have electrified man and subdued nature by fiery and self-devoted will; they may have been possessed of a so-called superhuman intelligence; they may have even had knowledge of, and communion with, members of our own Occult Brotherhood, but, having deliberately resolved to devote their vital energy to the welfare of others, rather than to themselves, they have surrendered life; and, when perishing on the cross or the scaffold, or falling, sword in hand, upon the battlefield, or sinking exhausted after a successful consummation of the life-object, on death-beds in their chambers, they have all alike had to cry out at last: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!"

So far, so good. But, given the will to live, however powerful, we have seen that, in the ordinary course of mundane life, the throes of dissolution cannot be checked. The desperate, and again and again renewed struggle of the kosmic elements to proceed with a career of change despite the will that is checking them, like a pair of run-away horses struggling against the determined driver holding them in, are so cumulatively powerful, that the utmost efforts of the *untrained* human will acting within an *unprepared* body become ultimately useless. The highest intrepidity of the bravest soldier; the intensest desire of the yearning lover; the hungry greed of the unsatisfied miser; the most undoubting faith of the sternest fanatic; the practised insensibility to pain of the hardiest red Indian brave or half-trained Hindu Yogi; the most deliberate philosophy of the calmest thinker—all alike fail at last. Indeed, sceptics will allege in opposition to the verities of this article that, as a matter of experience, it is often observed that the mildest and most irresolute of minds and the weakest of physical frames are often seen to resist "death" longer than the powerful will of the high-spirited and obstinately-egotistic man, and the iron frame of the labourer, the warrior and the athlete. In reality, however, the key to the secret of these apparently contradictory phenomena is the true conception of the very thing we have already said. If the physical development of the gross "outer shell" proceeds on parallel lines and at an equal rate with that of the will, it stands to reason that no advantage *for the purpose of overcoming it*, is attained by the latter. The acquisition of improved breech-loaders by one modern army confers no absolute superiority if the enemy also becomes possessed of them. Consequently it will be at once apparent, to those who think on the subject, that much of the training by which what is known as "a powerful and determined nature," perfects itself for its own purpose on the stage of the visible world, necessitating and *being useless* without a parallel development of the "gross" and so-called animal frame, is, in short, neutralized, for the purpose at present treated of, by the fact that its own action has armed the enemy with weapons equal to its own. The *force* of the impulse to dissolution is rendered equal to the will to oppose it; and being cumulative, subdues the will-power and triumphs at last. On the other hand, it may happen that an apparently weak and vacillating will-power residing in a weak and undeveloped physical frame, may be so *reinforced* by some unsatisfied desire—the Ichchha (wish), as it is called by the Indian Occultists (for instance, a mother's heart-yearning to remain and support her fatherless children)—as to keep down and vanquish, for a short time, the physical throes of a body to which it has become temporarily superior.

The whole *rationale*, then, of the first condition of continued existence in this world, is (*a*) the development of a will so powerful as to overcome the hereditary (in a Darwinian sense) tendencies of the atoms composing the "gross" and palpable animal frame, to hurry on at a particular period in a certain course of cosmic change; and (*b*) to so weaken the concrete action of that animal frame as to make it more amenable to the power of the will. To defeat an army, *you must demoralize and throw it into disorder.*

To do this then, is the real object of all the rites, ceremonies, fasts, "prayers," meditations, initiations and procedures of self-discipline enjoined by various esoteric Eastern sects, from that course of pure and elevated aspiration which leads to the higher phases of Real Adeptism, down to the fearful and disgusting ordeals which the adherent of the "Left-hand Road" has to pass through, all the time maintaining his equilibrium. The procedures have their merits and their demerits, their separate uses and abuses, their essential and non-essential parts, their various veils, mummeries, and labyrinths. But in all, the result aimed at is reached, if by different processes. The will is strengthened, encouraged, and directed, and the elements opposing its action are *demoralized*. Now, to any one who has thought out and connected the various evolution theories, as taken, not from any occult source, but from the ordinary scientific manual accessible to all—from the hypothesis of the latest variation in the habits of species; say the acquisition of carnivorous habits by the New Zealand parrot, for instance—to the farthest glimpses backwards into Space and Eternity afforded by the "fire mist" doctrine, it will be apparent that they all rest on one basis. That basis is, that the impulse once given to a hypothetical unit has a tendency to continue; and consequently, that anything "done" by some thing at a certain time and certain place tends to repeat itself at other times and places.

Such is the admitted *rationale* of heredity and atavism. That the same things apply to our ordinary conduct is apparent from the notorious ease with which "habits"—bad or good, as the case may be—are acquired, and it will not be questioned that this applies, as a rule, as much to the moral and intellectual, as to the physical world.

Furthermore, history and science teach us plainly that certain physical habits conduce to certain moral and intellectual results. There never yet was a conquering nation of vegetarians. Even in the old Aryan times, we do not learn that the very Rishis, from whose lore and practice we gain the knowledge of Occultism, ever interdicted the Kshatriya (military) caste from hunting or a carnivorous diet. Filling, as they did, a certain place in the body politic in the actual condition of the world, the Rishis as little thought of interfering with them, as of restraining the tigers of the jungle from their habits. That did not affect what the Rishis did themselves.

The aspirant to longevity then must be on his guard against *two dangers*. He must beware especially of impure and animal[6] thoughts. For science shows that thought is dynamic, and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The *inner men*,[7] however sublimated their organism may be, are still composed of actual, *not hypothetical*, particles, and are still subject to the law that an "action" has a tendency to repeat itself; a tendency to set up analogous action in the grosser "shell" they are in contact with, and concealed within.

And, on the other hand, certain actions have a tendency to produce actual physical conditions unfavourable to pure thought, hence to the state required for developing the supremacy of the inner man.

To return to the practical process. A normally healthy mind, in a normally healthy body, is a good starting point. Though exceptionally powerful and self-devoted natures may sometimes recover the ground lost by mental degradation or physical misuse, by employing proper means, under the direction of unswerving resolution, yet often things may have gone so far that there is no longer stamina enough to sustain the conflict sufficiently long to perpetuate this life; though what in Eastern parlance is called the "merit" of the effort will help to ameliorate conditions and improve matters in another.

However this may be, the prescribed course of self-discipline commences here. It may be stated briefly that its essence is a course of moral, mental, and physical development, carried on in parallel lines—one being useless without the other. The physical man must be rendered

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[6] In other words, the thought tends to provoke the deed.—G. M.

[7] We use the word in the plural, reminding the reader that, according to our doctrine, man is septenary.—G. M.

more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical. And it may be mentioned that all sense of restraint —even if self-imposed—is useless. Not only is all "goodness" that results from the compulsion of physical force, threats, or bribes (whether of a physical or so-called "spiritual" nature) absolutely useless to the person who exhibits it, its hypocrisy tending to poison the moral atmosphere of the world, but the desire to be "good" or "pure," to be efficacious must be spontaneous. It must be a self-impulse from within, a real preference for something higher, not an abstention from vice because of fear of the law; not a chastity enforced by the dread of "public opinion"; not a benevolence exercised through love of praise or dread of consequences in a hypothetical "future life."[8]

It will be seen now in connection with the doctrine of the tendency to the renewal of action, before discussed, that the course of self-discipline recommended as the only road to longevity by Occultism is *not* a "visionary" theory dealing with vague "ideas," but actually a scientifically devised system of drill. It is a system by which each particle of the several "men" composing the septenary individual receives an impulse, and a habit of doing what is necessary for certain purposes of its own free-will and with "pleasure." Every one must be practised and perfect in a thing to do it with pleasure. This rule especially applies to the case of the development of *man*. "Virtue" may be very good in its way—it may lead to the grandest results. But to become efficacious it has to be practised cheerfully, not with reluctance or pain. As a consequence of the above consideration the candidate for longevity at the commencement of his career must begin to eschew his physical desires, not from any sentimental theory of right or wrong, but for the following good reason. As, according to a well-known and now established scientific theory, his visible material frame is always renewing its particles; he will, while abstaining from the gratification of his desires, reach the end of a certain *period* during which those particles which composed the man of vice, and which were given a bad predisposition, will have departed. At the same time, the disuse of such functions will tend to obstruct the entry, in place of the old particles, of new particles having a tendency to repeat the said acts. And while this is the *particular* result as regards certain "vices," the general result of an abstention from "gross" acts will be (by a modification of the well-known Darwinian law of atrophy by non-usage) to diminish what we may call the "relative" density and coherence of the outer shell (as a result of its less-used molecules); while the diminution in the quantity of its actual constituents will be "made up" (if tried by scales and weights) by the increased admission of more ethereal particles.

What physical desires are to be abandoned and in what order? First and foremost, he must give up alcohol in all forms; for while it supplies no nourishment, nor any direct pleasure (beyond such sweetness or fragrance as may be gained in the taste of wine, etc., to which alcohol, in itself, is non-essential), to even the grossest elements of the "physical" frame, it induces a violence of action, a rush so to speak, of life, the stress of which can only be sustained by very dull, gross, and dense elements, and which, by the operation of the well-known law of reaction (in commercial phrase, "supply and demand") tends to summon them from the surrounding universe, and therefore directly counteracts the object we have in view.

Next comes meat-eating, and for the very same reason, in a minor degree. It increases the rapidity of life, the energy of action, the violence of passions. It may be good for a hero who has to fight and die, but not for a would-be sage who has to exist and . . .

Next in order come the sexual desires; for these, in addition to the great diversion of energy (vital force) into other channels, in many different ways, beyond the primary one (as, for instance, the waste of energy in expectation, jealousy, etc.), are direct attractions to a certain gross quality of the original matter of the universe, simply because the most pleasurable physical sensations are only possible at that stage of density. Alongside with and extending beyond all these and other gratifications of the senses (which include not only those things usually known as "vicious," but all those which, though ordinarily regarded as "innocent," have yet

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[8] Colonel Olcott clearly and succinctly explains the Buddhistic doctrine of Merit or Karma, in his *Buddhist Catechism* (Question 83).—G. M.

the disqualification of ministering to the pleasures of the body—the most harmless to others and the least "gross" being the criterion for those to be last abandoned in each case)—must be carried on the moral purification.

Nor must it be imagined that "austerities" as commonly understood can, in the majority of cases, avail much to hasten the "etherealizing" process. That is the rock on which many of the Eastern esoteric sects have foundered, and the reason why they have degenerated into degrading superstitions. The Western monks and the Eastern Yogis, who think they will reach the apex of powers by concentrating their thought on their navel, or by standing on one leg, are practising exercises which serve no other purpose than to strengthen the will-power, which is sometimes applied to the basest purposes. These are examples of this one-sided and dwarf development. It is no use to fast *as long as you require* food. The ceasing of desire for food without impairment of health is the sign which indicates that it should be taken in lesser and ever decreasing quantities until the extreme limit compatible with life is reached. A stage will be finally attained where only water will be required.

Nor is it of any use for this particular purpose of longevity to abstain from immorality so long as you are craving for it in your heart; and so on with all other unsatisfied inward cravings. To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

So it must be with the moral purification of the heart. The "basest" inclinations must go first—then the others. First avarice, then fear, then envy, worldly pride, uncharitableness, hatred; last of all ambition and curiosity must be abandoned successively. The strengthening of the more ethereal and so-called "spiritual" parts of the man must go on at the same time. Reasoning from the known to the unknown, meditation must be practised and encouraged. Meditation is the inexpressible yearning of the inner *man* to "*go out towards the infinite*," which in the olden time was the real meaning of adoration, but which has now no synonym in the European languages, because the thing no longer exists in the West, and its name has been vulgarized to the make-believe shams known as prayer, glorification, and repentance. Through all stages of training the equilibrium of the consciousness—the assurance that all *must* be right in the Kosmos, and therefore with *you*, a portion of it—must be retained. The process of life must not be hurried but retarded, if possible; to do otherwise may do good to others—perhaps even to yourself in other spheres, but it will hasten your dissolution in this.

Nor must the externals be neglected in this first stage. Remember that an Adept, though "existing" so as to convey to ordinary minds the idea of his being immortal, is not also invulnerable to agencies from without. The training to prolong life does not, in itself, secure one from accidents. As far as any physical preparation goes, the sword may still cut, the disease enter, the poison disarrange. This case is very clearly and beautifully put in *Zanoni*, and it is correctly put and must be so, unless all "adeptism" is a baseless lie. The Adept may be more secure from ordinary dangers than the common mortal, but he is so by virtue of the superior knowledge, calmness, coolness and penetration which his lengthened existence and its necessary concomitants have enabled him to acquire; not by virtue of any preservative power in the process itself. He is secure as a man armed with a rifle is more secure than a naked baboon; not secure in the sense in which the Deva (god) was supposed to be securer than a man.

If this is so in the case of the high Adept, how much more necessary is it that the neophyte should be not only protected but that he himself should use all possible means to ensure for himself the necessary duration of life to complete the process of mastering the phenomena we call death! It may be said, why do not the higher Adepts protect him? Perhaps they *do* to some extent, but the child must learn to walk alone; to make him independent of his own efforts in respect to safety, would be destroying one element necessary to his development—the sense of responsibility. What courage or conduct would be called for in a man sent to fight when armed with irresistible weapons and clothed in impenetrable armour? Hence the neophyte should endeavour, as far as possible, to fulfil every true canon of sanitary law as laid down by modern scientists. Pure air, pure water, pure food, gentle exercise, regular hours, pleasant occupations and surroundings, are all, if not indispensable, at least serviceable to his progress. It is to secure these, at least as much as silence and solitude, that the Gods, Sages, Occultists

of all ages have retired as much as possible to the quiet of the country, the cool cave, the depths of the forest, the expanse of the desert, or the heights of the mountains. Is it not suggestive that the Gods have always loved the "high places"; and that in the present day the highest section of the Occult Brotherhood on earth inhabits the highest mountain plateaux of the earth?[9]

Nor must the beginner disdain the assistance of medicine and good medical regimen. He is still an ordinary mortal, and he requires the aid of an ordinary mortal.

"Suppose, however, all the conditions required, or which will be understood as required (for the details and varieties of treatment requisite are too numerous to be detailed here), are fulfilled, what is the next step?"—the reader will ask. Well, if there have been no backslidings or remissness in the procedure indicated, the following physical results will follow:—

First the neophyte will take more pleasure in things spiritual and pure. Gradually gross and material occupations will become not only uncraved for or forbidden, but simply and literally repulsive to him. He will take more pleasure in the simple sensations of Nature—the sort of feeling one can remember to have experienced as a child. He will feel more light-hearted, confident, happy. Let him take care the sensation of renewed youth does not mislead, or he will yet risk a fall into his old baser life and even lower depths. "Action and reaction are equal."

Now the desire for food will begin to cease. Let it be left off gradually—no fasting is required. Take what you feel you require. The food craved for will be the most innocent and simple. Fruit and milk will usually be the best. Then, as till now you have been simplifying the quality of your food, gradually—very gradually—as you feel capable of it, diminish the quantity. You will ask: "Can a man exist without food?" No, but before you mock, consider the character of the process alluded to. It is a notorious fact that many of the lowest and simplest organisms have no excretions. The common guinea-worm is a very good instance. It has rather a complicated organism, but it has no ejaculatory duct. All it consumes—the poorest essences of the human body—is applied to its growth and propagation. Living as it does in human tissue, it passes no digested food away. The human neophyte, at a certain stage of his development, is in a somewhat analogous condition, with this difference or differences, that he *does* excrete, but it is through the pores of his skin, and by those too enter other etherealized particles of matter to contribute towards his support.[10] Otherwise, all the food and drink is sufficient only to keep in equilibrium those "gross" parts of his physical body which still remain to repair their cuticle-waste through the medium of the blood. Later on, the process of cell-development in his frame will undergo a change; a change for the better, the opposite of that in disease for the worse—he will become *all* living and sensitive, and will derive nourishment from the Ether (Akasha). But that epoch for our neophyte is yet far distant.

Probably, long before that period has arrived, other results, no less surprising than incredible to the uninitiated, will have ensued to give our neophyte courage and consolation in his difficult task. It would be but a truism to repeat what has been alleged (in ignorance of its *rationale*) by hundreds and hundreds of writers as to the happiness and content conferred by a life of innocence and purity. But often at the very commencement of the process some real physical result, unexpected and unthought of by the neophyte, occurs. Some lingering disease, hitherto deemed hopeless, may take a favourable turn; or he may develop healing mesmeric powers himself, or some hitherto unknown sharpening of his senses may delight him. The *rationale* of these things is, as we have said, neither miraculous nor difficult of comprehension. In the first place, the sudden change in the direction of the vital energy (which, whatever view we take

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[9] The stern prohibition to the Jews to serve "their gods upon the high mountains and upon the hills" is traced back to the unwillingness of their ancient elders to allow people in most cases unfit for adeptship to choose a life of celibacy and asceticism, or in other words, to pursue adeptship. This prohibition had an esoteric meaning before it became the prohibition, incomprehensible in its dead-letter sense: for it is not India alone whose sons accorded divine honours to the *Wise Ones*, but all nations regarded their Adepts and Initiates as divine.—G. M.

[10] He is in a state similar to the physical state of a fœtus before birth into the world.—G. M.

of it and its origin, is acknowledged by all schools of philosophy as most recondite, and as the motive power) must produce results of some kind. In the second, Theosophy shows, as we said before, that a man consists of several "men" pervading each other, and on this view (although it is very difficult to express the idea in language) it is but natural that the progressive etherealization of the densest and most gross of all should leave the others literally more at liberty. A troop of horses may be blocked by a mob and have much difficulty in fighting its way through; but if every one of the mob could be changed suddenly into a ghost, there would be little to retard it. And as each interior entity is more rare, active, and volatile than the outer, and as each has relation with different elements, spaces, and properties of the Kosmos which are treated of in other articles on Occultism, the mind of the reader may conceive—though the pen of the writer could not express it in a dozen volumes—the magnificent possibilities gradually unfolded to the neophyte.

Many of the opportunities thus suggested may be taken advantage of by the neophyte for his own safety, amusement, and the good of those around him; *but the way in which* he does this is one adapted to his fitness—a part of the ordeal he has to pass through, and misuse of these powers will certainly entail the loss of them as a natural result. The Ichchha (or desire) evoked anew by the vistas they open up will retard or throw back his progress.

But there is another portion of the Great Secret to which we must allude, and which is *now* for the first, in a long series of ages, allowed to be given out to the world, as the hour for it is come.

The educated reader need not be again reminded that one of the great discoveries which has immortalized the name of Darwin is the law that an organism has always the tendency to repeat, at an analogous period in its life, the action of its progenitors, the more surely and completely in proportion to their proximity in the scale of life. One result of this is, that, in general, organized beings usually die at a period (on an average) the same as that of their progenitors. It is true that there is a great difference between the *actual* ages at which individuals of any species die. Disease, accidents and famine are the main agents in causing this. But there is, in each species, a well-known limit within which the race-life lies, and none are known to survive beyond it. This applies to the human species as well as any other. Now, supposing that every possible sanitary condition had been complied with, and every accident and disease avoided by a man of ordinary frame, in some particular case there would still, as is known to medical men, come a time when the particles of the body would feel the hereditary tendency to do that which leads inevitably to dissolution, *and would obey it.* It must be obvious to any reflecting man that, if by *any* procedure this critical climacteric could be once thoroughly passed over, the subsequent danger of "death" would be proportionally less as the years progressed. Now this, which no ordinary and unprepared mind and body can do, is possible sometimes for the will and the frame of one who has been specially prepared. There are fewer of the grosser particles present to feel the hereditary bias—there is the assistance of the reinforced "interior men" (whose normal duration is always greater even in natural death) to the visible outer shell, and there is the drilled and indomitable will to direct and wield the whole.[11]

From that time forward the course of the aspirant is clearer. He has conquered the "Dweller of the Threshold"—the hereditary enemy of his race, and, though still exposed to ever-new dangers in his progress towards Nirvana, he is flushed with victory, and with new confidence and new powers to second it, can press onwards to perfection.

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[11] In this connection we may as well show what modern science, and especially physiology, has to say as to the power of the human will. "The force of will is a potent element in determining longevity. This single point must be granted without argument, that of two men every way alike and similarly circumstanced, the one who has the greater courage and grit will be longer-lived. One does not need to practise medicine long to learn that men die who might just as well live if they resolved to live, and that myriads who are invalids could become strong if they had the native or acquired will to vow they would do so. Those who have no other quality favourable to life, whose bodily organs are nearly all diseased, to whom each day is a day of pain, who are beset by life-shortening influences, yet do live by will alone."—Dr. GEORGE M. BEARD.

For, it must be remembered, that nature everywhere acts by law, and that the process of purification we have been describing in the visible material body, also takes place in those which are interior, and not visible to the scientist by modifications of the same process. All is on the change, and the metamorphoses of the more ethereal bodies imitate, though in successively multiplied duration, the career of the grosser, gaining an increasing wider range of relations with the surrounding Kosmos, till in Nirvana the most rarefied Individuality is merged at last into the Infinite Totality.

From the above description of the process, it will be inferred why it is that Adepts are so seldom seen in ordinary life; for *pari passu* with the etherealization of their bodies and the development of their power grows an increasing distaste, and a so-to-speak "contempt" for the things of our ordinary mundane existence. Like the fugitive who successively casts away in his flight those articles which incommode his progress, beginning with the heaviest, so the aspirant eluding "death" abandons all on which the latter can take hold. In the progress of Negation everything got rid of is a help. As we said before, the Adept does not become "immortal" as the word is ordinarily understood. By or about the time when the death-limit of his race is passed he is *actually dead*, in the ordinary sense, that is to say, he has relieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disruption the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of, the world; he is oblivious of its pleasures, careless of its miseries, in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of Duty never leaves him blind to its very existence. For the new ethereal senses opening to wider spheres are to ours much in the relation of ours to the Infinitely Little. New desires and enjoyments, new dangers and hindrances arise, with new sensations and new perceptions; and far away down in the mist—both literally and metaphorically—is our dirty little earth left below by those who have virtually "gone to join the gods."

And from this account, too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophist to "procure for them communication with the highest Adepts." It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say: "This is not god-like. This is the acme of selfishness." . . . But let him realize that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to once more submit to incarnation. And is the result of all that have gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?

A deep consideration of all that we have written will also give the Theosophists an idea of what they demand when they ask to be put in the way of gaining *practically* "higher powers." Well, there, as plainly as words can put it, is the Path. . . . Can they tread it?

Nor must it be disguised that what to the ordinary mortal are unexpected dangers, temptations and enemies, also beset the way of the neophyte. And that for no fanciful cause, but for the simple reason that he is, in fact, acquiring new senses, has yet no practice in their use, and has never before seen the things he sees. A man born blind suddenly endowed with vision would not at once master the meaning of perspective, but would, like a baby, imagine in one case, the moon to be within his reach, and, in the other, grasp a live coal with the most reckless confidence.

And what, it may be asked, is to recompense this abnegation of all the pleasures of life, this cold surrender of all mundane interests, this stretching forward to an unknown goal which seems ever more unattainable? For, unlike some of the anthropomorphic creeds, Occultism offers to its votaries no eternally permanent heaven of material pleasure, to be gained at once by one quick dash through the grave. As has, in fact, often been the case, many would be prepared willingly to die *now* for the sake of the paradise hereafter. But Occultism gives no such prospect of cheaply and immediately gained infinitude of pleasure, wisdom, and existence. It only promises extensions of these, stretching in successive arches obscured by successive veils, in an unbroken series up the long vista which leads to Nirvana. And this, too, qualified by the

necessity that new powers entail new responsibilities, and that the capacity of increased pleasure entails the capacity of increased sensibility to pain. To this, the only answer that can be given is twofold: (firstly) the consciousness of power is itself the most exquisite of pleasures, and is unceasingly gratified in the progress onwards with new means for its exercise; and (secondly), as has been already said, *this* is the only road by which there is the faintest scientific likelihood that "death" can be avoided, perpetual memory secured, infinite wisdom attained, and hence an immense helping of mankind made possible, once that the Adept has safely crossed the turning-point. Physical as well as metaphysical logic requires and endorses the fact that only by gradual absorption into infinity can the Part become acquainted with the Whole, and that that which is *now something* can only feel, know, and enjoy *everything* when lost in Absolute Totality in the vortex of that Unalterable Circle wherein our Knowledge becomes Ignorance, and the Everything itself is identified with the Nothing.

G. M.

REVIEWS

The Problem of Atlantis, by Lewis Spence; William Rider & Son, London, 1924; price, 10*s*. 6*d*.

Everyone whose intuition or imagination has in any way been kindled by Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, should by all means read this book, worthy of a consideration which can hardly be granted to the lucubrations of Donnelly. Mr. Spence has long been known as a student of primitive folk-lore and archæology, more particularly of the Aztecs, Mayas and Egyptians. The evidence which he has amassed in this field is indisputable, and will interest the general reader, who is certain to learn many things, which he will regard as astonishing coincidences, even if he is not "converted" to a belief in Atlantis, when his perusal of the book is completed.

At the outset let me hasten to do the author the justice to state that his object is not to prove the former existence of an Atlantic continent, nor does he believe that he has proved it. In the words of the preface, his object was to "place the study of the whole problem on a more accurate basis than has been attempted in recent times." In this the present reviewer believes him to have been eminently successful.

Two opening chapters deal with Plato's well-known account of Atlantis, a very specific one, which he claimed to have received from Egyptian priests. Mr. Spence's main thesis is to adduce known archæological facts from the early or ancient peoples on both sides of the Atlantic, showing that elements in their civilization, religion, or in general anthropology, corroborate to a surprising extent the account of Plato, when stripped of fanciful embellishments. The general theory is propounded that the civilizations of the Egyptians, the Aztecs, Mayas and Incas, the Guanches of the Canaries, and the extinct Crô-Magnons, all have many points in common, that their origins are unknown, that they were Atlantean, and that consequently, there must have been an Atlantis, where the root civilization developed. The chief premise of our author is that generations of study have shown that folk-lore and myths, especially when recurrent in different peoples, have time and again been shown to have a basis of historical fact, and that people with similar customs, religions or traditions have in some way in the past been connected. This premise is, I think, sound, as witness the discovery of ancient Troy in our own generation, the existence of which was supposed to be a pure myth, and the still more recent discovery that the legend of King Arthur has an historical foundation. Thirteen chapters are devoted to this archæological and anthropological evidence. Here the author is for the most part on the sure grounds of his own field, and these chapters include much proved fact that no living person could gainsay. Illustrations are the pyramids of the Toltecs and the Egyptians, the numerous traditions of a deluge and cataclysm, the tradition of the Aztecs that they came in boats from the east, the resemblances between the Guanches and the Crô-Magnons, the similarity in burial customs of all these peoples, etc., etc. Just what inferences, however, should be drawn from these facts is another matter, and here the author is certain to encounter disagreement from leading experts.

Two preliminary chapters deal with the geological and biological evidence. As is to be expected, these are the poorest in the book, not in any sense to the disparagement of the author, but because he is an archæologist, not a geologist or a biologist, and consequently could not have written on these sciences with equal competence. There are several geologists of repute who believe in an Atlantic continent or at least in land masses, where now is the great submerged tableland in mid-ocean, of which the Azores and the Canaries are culminating points.

It is equally true that certain similarities of outline of parts of both the American and European coasts can be best explained by the subsidence of land formerly existing between them. But the main difficulty which prevents Science to-day from regarding Atlantis as a justifiable postulate, is the depth of this submarine tableland below the surface of the ocean, which averages some seventeen hundred fathoms. There is, unfortunately, no definite evidence that any land mass of any size ever has undergone so considerable an emergence or subsidence as two miles. Science does not say that such a change has never taken place, or that it cannot have taken place; but it cannot postulate something for which there is no definite evidence.

The biological evidence is even weaker, and, curiously enough, has been growing weaker for forty years. Briefly, biological evidence for the existence of a former land mass takes the general form that numerous closely related animals and plants are found separated by an ocean, of sufficient width so that they could not have flown or been blown across, and they could not live under oceanic conditions. There are many cases where the definitely known existence of a former land mass fully explains such discontinuous distribution. It is true that there are many cases of close resemblance between animals and plants of the Atlantic littoral of both America and the Old World, particularly Newfoundland and Great Britain, Brazil and West Africa, also Ireland and the Azores. There have been and still are irresponsible biologists who do not hesitate to "conjure up" a continent to explain any anomaly of geographical distribution, without worrying their heads about geological evidence. Forty years ago there was a strong body of opinion favouring a land bridge between Africa and the New World. But palæontological evidence has gradually been accumulating to explain away many of these cases, and it has been proved, by incontrovertible evidence, that the New World type, closely resembling the Old World type, reached its new home via Asia and the Behring Strait. How then is Science to handle the balance of the cases whose origin is not known? In the first place, all depends upon the haphazard of palæontological discovery. In the second place, it is surely more justifiable to believe that the derivation of some animal in Brazil was probably like that of others, where it is known, than to erect a continent for it to pass over. When confronted with two evils, Science must choose the lesser miracle of the two, as a working hypothesis!

The present reviewer is not competent to examine criticially the archæological evidence adduced by Mr. Spence. But he can say something about the logic and the psychology of the book, both of which are interesting studies in themselves. While the author states in his preface that he does not prove the existence of Atlantis, it is obvious that he believes in it intensely himself, and the rest of the book is written as if he were proving it. As a result, he frequently violates every law as to what constitutes proof. Thus, the remarkable resemblances between the Guanches of the Canaries and the Crô-Magnons, are apparently regarded as proof of their common Atlantean origin, and consequently of the existence of Atlantis. This does not constitute proof nor come anywhere near it. Granted the resemblances, the fact that there is no evidence of either people knowing anything about boats, and our total ignorance of where the Crô-Magnons came from, or where their culture originated,—all this does not prove for a minute "that the Crô-Magnon race was indigenous to the Canary Islands, the remnants of Atlantis, and did not drift there from Europe." Unfortunately, the laws of logic limit scientific hypothesis far more severely. Granting the same evidence as before, if there were an Atlantis to-day, it would be justifiable to postulate the Atlantean origin of the Crô-Magnon, provided that the difficulty of the boats is explained plausibly. To postulate a former land connection in default of definite geological evidence, would *not* be a justifiable method of overcoming this difficulty. Even then the Crô-Magnon might have originated in Spain, and it might have been the Guanches who left the ancestral home and got to Atlantis, instead of the other way about.

In other places the logic of the author "backfires" in a curious way. Thus the account of Plato describes an Atlantean type of fortification, consisting of a palace on a hill surrounded by concentric zones of water and wall. This and other features of his account are supposed to have corroborative evidence. Towards the end of the book we learn, for instance, that the Mayas, Aztecs and Incas built fortifications on some such plan. At this stage the author is trying to prove the Atlantean origin of these peoples, and the reader is asked to "recollect that

Atlantis was encircled by several zones of land and water." In another connection the author, as proof of the Atlantean origin of some custom, states that "we already know" that this was the case in Atlantis, citing Plato as authority. Plato's account of Atlantis can perhaps be rendered more plausible by archæological testimony. But the archæological testimony cannot be rendered Atlantean in origin because it is similar to Plato's account. Rendered into logical terms, the thing to be proved cannot be used to prove the validity of the premises upon which the thing to be proved must be based!

I have gone into some detail in my unfavourable criticism, as these points are subtile, and would escape all but the careful reader. The first impression would be one of irresistible testimony of the existence of Atlantis, an impression which would not have a logical basis to stand upon. The concluding chapter, as far as this feature is concerned, is the best in the book, as the author endeavours to overcome this impression, stating that "enthusiasm has doubtless frequently outstripped caution and even probability." I can do no better than quote further expressions which every Theosophist will heartily endorse. "But I would plead that the case I have so weakly endeavoured to set forth should not be judged by the shortcomings of its advocate. Many more worthy causes have found protagonists who were moved to plead on their behalf by a feeling of inward certainty to justify which they could bring only inadequate proof and expression, and among these I may be numbered. But however poor my testimony, the intuition which inspired it remains powerful and irrefragable, indestructible, indeed, as the world-memory of that ancient and original culture I have attempted to unveil." To these sentiments the reviewer can only respond with a hearty amen. The problem of Atlantis is still worthy of consideration, defying the inadequacy of logic and scientific proof, thanks to the intuition of Mr. Spence. To the same high gift of intuition we owe the survival of the great religious truths, which are equally incapable of exact scientific demonstration. So, while the reader must not believe that the existence of Atlantis has been established, he may believe that it might be established in the future. Unselfish, passionate belief and intuition are splendid positive forces, which are not aroused over trifles, nor allowed to dissipate, having yielded a barren harvest.

BIOLOGIST.

The Ideals of Asceticism, by the Reverend O. Hardman; The Macmillan Company, 1924; price, $2.00.

"The world of to-day stands in sore need of true ascetics in every land, men and women of a generous enthusiasm, eager loyalty, and disciplined strength." This timely volume, by its survey of the universal and instinctive demand for asceticism in all climates, among all peoples, within all religions, even the most primitive, should serve to arouse a new respect for the time-honoured methods of self-discipline. Rightly understood, asceticism is a means to an end,—and, human nature being what it is, a necessary means. The first steps of the Path require "the surgeon's knife," says *Light on the Path*, and "He only can demand assistance of a Master when this is accomplished, or at all events, partially so." "Ascetic practice is very far from being merely the due performance of an artificially contrived set of exercises. Every situation in which men are required to endure hardship and to suffer may be made an occasion of asceticism: but it can be so treated only by whole-hearted adoption; that is to say, by a willing response which appropriates the compulsory and the inevitable and transmutes it into a voluntary activity" (p. 9).

The author, by the comparative study of religions, seeking with an instinctive but theosophic intellectual attitude for the best in what he finds, has recognized the primary place of asceticism in all true ascents of the spirit; and he concludes with a plea for a virile religious life, for that ability to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ" of a Paul.

A thoughtful, readable, stimulating study, suggestive and useful to all who have set themselves upon the higher way.

MARION HALE.

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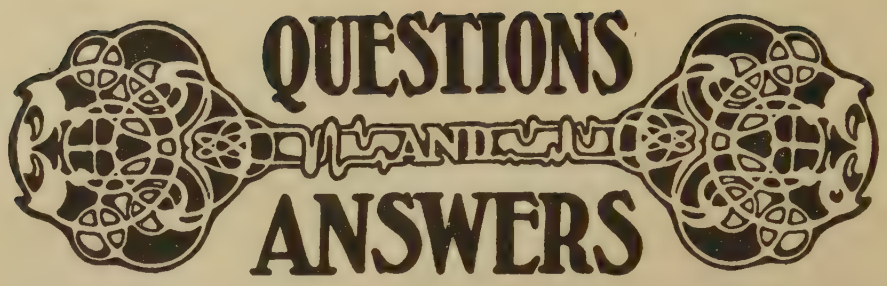

QUESTION NO. 296.—*Do Theosophists in general advocate vegetarianism, and, if so, is it because the eating of meat is supposed to coarsen the nature, or because the killing of animals is accounted wrong?*

ANSWER.—Some students of Theosophy disapprove of the eating of meat for both reasons suggested, but regard strict vegetarianism as an end to be attained rather than as a present duty. It would seem to be unwise to try to change too suddenly the meat-eating habits of centuries, which we inherit with our physical bodies. It is improbable that the average person could suddenly forego the eating of any meat, without suffering a decrease of physical or nervous force, which would seriously hamper him in the performance of his duties and which he would be unable to restore by the direct assimilation of any vegetable food, because his organs of assimilation are not easily adapted to an exclusively vegetarian diet. It is interesting to note that the Laws of Manu in ancient India provided that the warrior caste, the *Kshatriya*, should eat meat.

S. V.

ANSWER.—So far as my observation goes, students of Theosophy do not advocate universal vegetarianism at present. Like everything else, it depends on the individual. What is right at one stage of development and under one set of circumstances, may be wrong at another. Eating meat undoubtedly coarsens some natures, blunts certain perceptions. Others may need it. It is conceivable that those of a given degree of development may have to blunt some perceptions in order to live at all in the world to-day. Most of us need to develop ours to the fullest extent we can. A good general rule is to eat as little meat as is consistent with the maintenance of health. There are many things that coarsen the nature more than meat eating, self-pity, for instance.

J. F. B. M.

ANSWER.—There is no general observance of vegetarianism by students of Theosophy, although many advocate its practice. The approval or otherwise of meat-eating seems to depend largely upon the individual's taste. If he personally likes meat, he is apt to remind himself that we are in Kali Yuga, and therefore need strong food to resist the adverse influences of this age. If for reasons of health or by preference he eats little or no meat, he persuades himself that such food is bad for the spiritual as well as the physical health. Students of Theosophy, at least in the Western world, do not appear to regard the killing of animals as wrong *per se*, provided the killing is done for a purpose, such as the providing of food or raiment for mankind, and is not wanton.

S.

ANSWER.—If anyone eats meat with enjoyment, it suggests that his psychic nature is meaty. Meat can, however, be eaten from a sense of duty. Personally I do not believe that anyone needs it more than once a day, and then only in small quantity. Once grant that you should kill a mosquito to prevent malaria—and only the Jains, I believe, would refuse to do so—it follows logically that you should kill a sheep to prevent anæmia, a wolf to avoid being devoured, or a German soldier, in wartime, to prevent the defilement of everything you love. On the other hand, to kill anything for any purpose, no matter how righteous, is at best a disgusting necessity. That most of us need meat, or think we do, merely proves that our stomachs and intestines are carnivorous in comparison with the insides of some Asiatics, among whom are men of immense physical strength who do not touch meat at any stage of their existence.

The only real argument I know against vegetarianism in western lands is that the man who abstains from meat "on principle" is likely to think himself superior, and is more than likely to make his diet and himself an everlasting nuisance to his friends. Q. E. D.

QUESTION No. 297.—*Is not evolution inevitable, even without our effort; then why struggle?*

ANSWER.—Some sort of evolution would seem inevitable, in the fact of "the survival of the fittest," in "the struggle for life." The working out of the forces of life demonstrates this in the animal kingdom, and the most successful in survival are those who can adapt themselves most readily to their circumstances. But such animals are compelled to make efforts, and by these they acquire the power to survive in their struggle to deal with the circumstances of life. Why then should man be exempt? But there is this difference. Man is aware of the need for effort and he asks himself "why?" In man there is a triple evolution taking place as is stated in Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*. That is distinctively man's province, and it is here that man becomes subject to an evolutionary need which is different from the physical though similar, and, as stated by Professor Ladd, "obedient to a nature and laws of its own." A. K.

ANSWER.—Perhaps if the world were happily evolving there would be no need to struggle, but one sees pain and misery on all sides—the deepest agony, often, among those who are thought to have the easiest berths. The point as I see it, is, by struggle, to force oneself to evolve more quickly, acquiring strength and knowledge with which to try to help lift the world out of its self-made Hell.

"The world behind you is praying for helpers none the less fervently because its prayers are dumb. Labour unremittingly, therefore, that you may attain the power to aid them: lifting them,—and so carrying part of that common weight of care and responsibility which your Master serenely bears, and which it is your privilege to share." *Fragments*, Vol. II. page 120.
M. A. J. H.

ANSWER.—There is a certain difference between the evolution of beings in the kingdoms below man and the evolution of man himself. This difference may be free-will. Evolution in the lower kingdoms is more of a mass evolution, whereas, although the evolution of man takes place as a race, it takes place more through the evolution of the individual soul. In animal evolution, all animals slowly move up together. But one man can attain a point far ahead of his race. The species which retrogrades dies out. In the human kingdom one man may.

Our present aim is the development of a permanent individuality and we must effect this ourselves. The whole movement of the human race will assist us, but it will not do it for us. If we decide not to evolve, the momentum of evolution will cut us off. That which we expect to assist us will eliminate us. ST. C. B.

ANSWER.—Evolution *is* inevitable, even without my effort; but if I don't move with it, I move backward, and if I move backward far enough, even an oyster will refuse to harbour my *skandhas* (*anglice*, remains). Still, there are other motives for the "struggle." We may want to help others, and we may discover what idiots we are and how necessary it is to gain some sense before stepping in where angels fear to tread. The acquisition of sense involves a terrific struggle. Try it, and see. D. E. Q.

QUESTION No. 298.—*We are told repeatedly and with emphasis that one must live the life to know the doctrine. If this means anything else than simply to be good, I wish some one would explain it.*

ANSWER.—Perhaps among other things it may mean that if we would see the view we must climb the mountain. There is no other way. First, however, it is necessary to realize that there is a view to be seen and a mountain to be climbed. "Remember, O disciple, that great though the gulf may be between the good man and the sinner, it is greater between the good man and the man who has attained knowledge; it is immeasurable between the good man and the one on the threshold of divinity" (*Light on the Path*, page 22). Knowledge, first-hand knowledge of the Divine, exists and is attainable. To this knowledge the theosophical doctrine points the way. Chelaship is revealed by it as a present-day possibility and fact. "Good-

ness" is essential for it, but it is only one step. "First a man, then a gentleman, then a chela." Many statements are made of what occurs at different points along this Path, statements of matters quite beyond the experience of even very good men, and which can only be understood by living them. "At the heart of pain lies joy," is, for instance, quite meaningless to most of us and will remain so until we find the joy there for ourselves. Spiritual growth is growth into higher and higher states of consciousness. These higher states can only be understood as they are experienced. They can no more be described in words to one who has not yet attained to them, than the perfume of a rose could be described to one utterly destitute of the sense of smell. Knowledge and understanding are given us as our actions prove that we can be trusted with them, that we desire them above all else, and as we need them for further advance. Rules appropriate to each stage of development must be followed before further advance becomes possible. These rules are not arbitrary, but are the laws of life itself. As we live in accordance with them, we attain to greater and greater knowledge of the doctrine. "He who is perfected in devotion finds spiritual wisdom springing up within himself." J. F. B. M.

ANSWER.—What do we mean by simple goodness? There is another excellent axiom: "Be good and you will be happy." But there are many people, who consider themselves very good indeed, although they give every outward indication of unhappiness. The real point seems to be, that goodness is a much more positive thing than mere passive obedience to civil laws, and abstention from the grosser forms of self-indulgence. According to an older and more generous definition, the Good is only another name for the proper goal of man. We are good in so far as we move towards that goal, and, as we move nearer to it, we see it more distinctly. Thus, we have been told of the "spiritual identity of all souls with the Oversoul," and that it is the destiny of every soul to become fully conscious of this identity. By living out the details of daily life with the purpose of making manifest our oneness with the Oversoul, we enter into a deeper and more luminous self-consciousness, which carries within itself a more definite and more personal vision of spiritual realities, which had formerly seemed only remote abstractions. S. L.

ANSWER.—If the doctrine to which you refer is the doctrine, "Be good," then all you need is to be good in order to know the truth of that doctrine; but if the doctrine were to include more than this—if it were the doctrine, "Be good with good taste," or "Be good wisely"—then, really to understand the more inclusive doctrine, you would have to aim at more than mere goodness. The point is that *every* doctrine must be lived before it can be known. Thus, many people *believe* that the Master Christ is a living Master; comparatively few *know* that doctrine to be true. To know the doctrine, with its ever-widening implications, it is necessary to live it. This means, among other things, that we must learn to keep the desire of our hearts as firmly fixed on him, as the desire of his heart is fixed on "the Father,"—so far as it lies in our power to do so. We must live the life which the doctrine logically demands, if we wish to *know* the doctrine: that is to say, we must turn belief into action, not only on the physical plane, but on the planes of thought and feeling and imagination. O. X.

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Founded by H. P. Blavatsky at New York in 1875

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